

The Ministering Angel  
by E. C. Bentley

alfred

\$1.50

# HITCHCOCK'S

mystery magazine

December, 1982



## The Marley Case

by Linda Haldeman

and More Exciting New Stories!

0 02646



12



387165

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Silhouette Special Editions go far beyond any romances you have read before. Because they have *more—more pages, more passion, more pleasure.*

These are *big, powerful* stories that will fire your imagination. You'll meet ardent lovers and jealous rivals—thrill to exciting conflict and drama—share intimate moments of surging emotions and tender passion. Silhouette Special Editions will keep you entranced as you turn each page.

#### **4 Silhouette Special Editions FREE—no strings attached**

Now you can get the first four Silhouette Special Editions ever published, absolutely *free*. "Terms of Surrender"... "Valaquez Bride"... "Intimate Strangers"... "Mexican Rhapsody." These four books, a \$7.80 value, are *yours free for the asking*, if you act now.

#### **Silhouette Special Editions Free Previews, Bonus Books, Free Home Delivery**

Each month Silhouette Special Editions home subscription service will send you six new books just as soon as they are published. Look them over for 15 days. If you're not delighted, return only five and owe nothing. One book is always yours free.

Silhouette Special Editions are delivered right to your door with never a charge for postage or handling—and there's no obligation to buy anything at any time.

Discover the most exciting romances being published today  
**Send for your free books now.**

# Are you ready for your next great romance?



**4 BOOKS  
FREE**  
(a \$7.80 value)



## *Silhouette Special Editions*

**Silhouette Special Editions, 120 Brighton Road, Clifton, NJ 07012**

Yes, please send me FREE and without obligation, the 4 exciting Silhouette Special Edition romances described in this ad. Unless you hear from me after I receive my 4 FREE books, please send me 6 new Silhouette Special Editions to preview each month as soon as they are published. I understand that you will bill me for just 5 of them at \$1.95 each (a total of \$9.75), with no additional shipping, handling or other hidden charges. One book is always mine FREE each month. There is no minimum number of books that I must buy, and I can cancel this arrangement anytime I wish. The first 4 books are mine to keep, even if I never take a single additional book.

Name

(please print)

Address

City

State

Zip

Signature (If under 18, parent or guardian must sign)

This offer, limited to one per household, expires July 31, 1983. If price changes are necessary after that date, you will be notified.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG  
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AHB21A

# CONTENTS



## SHORT STORIES

<b>THE MARLEY CASE</b> by Linda Haldeman	<b>4</b>
<b>CINNAMON TWIST</b> by T. Robin Kantner	<b>24</b>
<b>THE EMBEZZLER'S CHRISTMAS PRESENT</b> by Ennis Duling	<b>44</b>
<b>INSPECTOR UEKI'S DAY</b> by Ron Butler	<b>52</b>
<b>THE DESCENDANTS OF FROST</b> by Louis Weinstein	<b>90</b>
<b>DIMINISHED CAPACITY</b> by Loren D. Estleman	<b>123</b>
<b>WISHED-FOR BELONGINGS</b> by Michael Bishop	<b>132</b>

## MYSTERY CLASSIC

<b>THE MINISTERING ANGEL</b> by E. C. Bentley	<b>141</b>
---	------------

## DEPARTMENTS

<b>3 EDITOR'S NOTES</b>	<b>117 UNSOLVED</b> by Jerome Meyer
<b>74 CASES ON FILE:</b> The Mystery of the Copper Plates by J. Frank Dobie	<b>118 MURDER BY DIRECTION</b> by Peter Shaw
<b>80 BOOKED &amp; PRINTED</b> by Mary Cannon	<b>121 FRAMES OF REFERENCE</b> by Peter Christian
<b>85 THE MYSTERIOUS PHOTOGRAPH</b>	<b>154 SOLUTION TO THE NOVEMBER "UNSOLVED"</b>
<b>86 THE STORY THAT WON</b>	

ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE Vol. 27, No. 13, December, 1982. Published 13 times a year, every 28 days, by Davis Publications, Inc., at \$1.50 a copy. Annual subscription \$16.25 in the U.S.A. and possessions; \$19.75 elsewhere payable in advance in U.S. funds. Allow 6 to 8 weeks for change of address. Editorial and Executive Offices, 380 Lexington Ave., N.Y., N.Y. 10017. Subscription orders and mail regarding subscriptions should be sent to P.O. Box 1932, Marion, O. 43305. Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing office: © 1982 by Davis Publications, Inc., all rights reserved. Protection secured under the Universal Copyright Convention. Reproduction or use without express permission of editorial or pictorial content in any manner is prohibited. Printed in U.S.A. All submissions must be accompanied by stamped self-addressed envelope; the Publisher assumes no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts. **ISSN:0002-5224.**

Cover by Joe Burleson

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG  
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



# EDITOR'S NOTES

Season's Greetings from the staff of AHMM



**Cathleen Jordan**, Editor; **Lois Adams**, Editorial Assistant; **Ralph Rubino**, Art Director; **Gerry Hawkins**, Associate Art Director; **Ron Kuliner**, Art Editor; **Carl Barte**, Production Director; **Carole Dixon**, Production Manager; **Iris Temple**, Director, Subsidiary Rights; **Barbara Bazyn**, Manager, Contracts & Permissions; **Layne Layton**, Promotion Manager; **Robert Castardi**, Circulation Director, Retail Marketing; **Rose Wayner**, Classified Advertising Director; **William F. Battista**, Advertising Director (New York: 212-557-9100; Chicago: 312-346-0712; Los Angeles: 213-795-3114).

**Joel Davis**, President & Publisher; **Leonard F. Pinto**, Vice President & General Manager; **Carole Dolph Gross**, Vice President, Marketing & Editorial; **Leonard H. Habas**, Vice President, Circulation; **Fred Edinger**, Vice President, Finance.

FICTION

---

# The MARLEY CASE

by Linda  
Haldeman

**W**e do Christmas right at our house—the holly and the ivy and the manger and the tree. Stockings all hung and an ever full was-sail bowl for thirsty carollers. I use the pronoun “we” editorially, for all this holiday jollity comes your way with the compliments of Joyce and the kids. I’m not much of a celebrator

myself, and even in my youth avoided when possible all those cherished tribal rituals.

Some people don’t. Joyce, for instance. For years I didn’t understand. I thought it was just for the children, all the decking of halls and jingling of bells and harking of herald angels. But as the children grew up, the merry mayhem diminished not

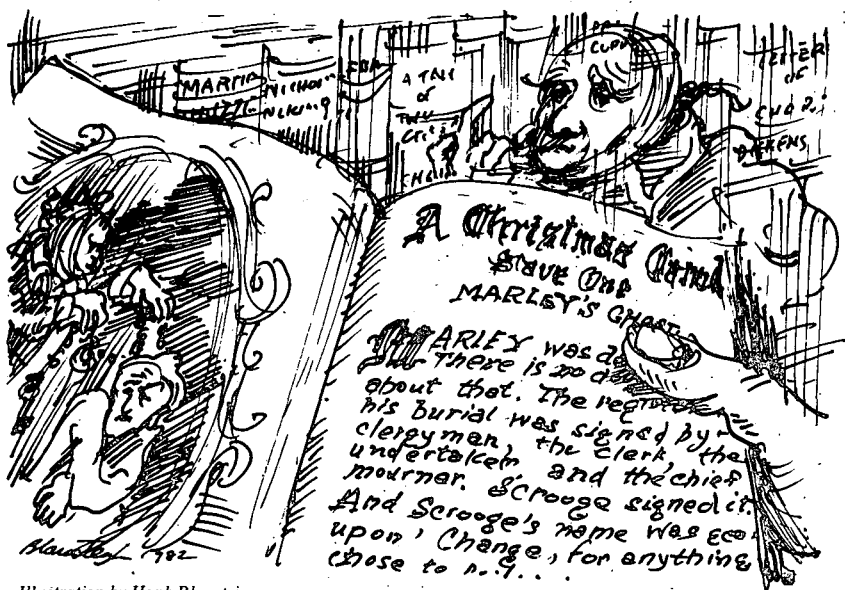


Illustration by Hank Blaustein

at all, and I still find myself in my middle years surrounded by a trio of oversized moppets bandaging boxes in miles of red satin ribbon and spreading tinsel all over everything.

A week before this Christmas just past, I was force fed a certain minimal dose of spirit when I was carted to the church youth club's annual dramatization of

*A Christmas Carol*. This, I must admit, is one of the less objectionable parts of the customary Saturnalia. It's not the Royal Shakespeare Company, to be sure, but it certainly is an improvement on the pageants of my childhood, where at least one angel fainted every year and the wise men always forgot their lines. As in everything

else seasonal, the family had a considerable stake in this production. Stephanie, in a billowy gauze gown that reminded me painfully of a Sunday School angel's robe, was the Ghost of Christmas Past.

"Long past?" the boy who played Scrooge asked warily.

"No, your past," Steffy replied in a thin, æthereal voice that actually made me, her father, shiver. I have at times envisioned Steffy as a basketball coach or a carnival barker, but certainly not as an actress, and not with that voice. Remarkable.

Mark played, of course, Tiny Tim. He's small for his age and is able to project a deceptive air of cherubic innocence.

"God bless us every one," he intoned with the falsetto intensity of a child evangelist. It was a performance that melted poor sentimental old Scrooge's heart. It hardened mine, not just because I could not fully separate Mark smiling sweetly onstage from Mark raising hell at the dinner table, but because I always suspect virtuous children.

We stopped at Mister Donut on the way home. Steffy, no longer ghostly, had a double chocolate doughnut and a cup of hot chocolate. I could almost see the acne pop out. Mark, choosing, it seems, to remain for a while in character, se-

lected something gooey called "angel filled."

"It's remarkable," said Joyce, "how a great piece like that doesn't date. But then the Christmas spirit doesn't date, either."

"Bah!" I said. "Humbug!"

"Oh, Daddy," Steffy sighed as only an adolescent daughter can.

"You know," I went on, "I've often wondered about one thing. Just as it says: 'Marley was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that.' " (I was proud to quote with such perfect accuracy, for the kids were obviously impressed. And how often can a man of my age and shortcomings impress his kids?) "Okay. Marley was dead. But what did he die of?"

"I don't know, probably a stroke or a heart attack," said Joyce. "After all, he was a classic type A personality."

"Have you considered the possibility of foul play?"

There. I had caught their attention, dropped a curdling dollop of vinegar into their emotional eggnog of peace and goodwill. What fun.

"Oh, I get it," Mark exclaimed in an astounding show of insight, for him. "He could have been murdered."

"Now who would do that?" Joyce laughed.

"Look for a motive."



"Scrooge himself would be a prime suspect," said Steffy. She's quick-witted for a ghost and a sophomore, and she shares my love of detective fiction. "He had a motive. Money. He inherited Marley's half of the business, right?"

"Too obvious," I said. "The obvious suspect is never the real culprit."

"Anyhow," Mark chimed in, "if Scrooge had done him in, why would Marley have come back from the dead to save him? I bet it was good old Tiny Tim, bashed the old skinflint's brains out with his crutch for not paying his father a decent wage."

"Impossible," Steffy snickered. "How old do you think Tiny Tim was, midget? He probably wasn't even born when Marley died. 'Mr. Marley has been dead these seven years,' Scrooge says. Bob Cratchit might not even have worked for Scrooge and Marley then. Faced you, hosehead!"

Occasionally, not often, mind you, but every now and then, your children make you proud.

We celebrate Christmas early now that the children are older, one tradition that I like, for it gets the worst of it out of the way and permits the household to settle back more quickly into the blessed monotony of the midwinter doldrums. It all starts on Christmas Eve, with an ex-

tensive carolling tour of the neighborhood, ending up at St. Nicholas (no less) Parish Church in time for Midnight Mass. I don't attend, especially at Christmas, for of all tinsel, liturgical tinsel is the most incongruous.

I was feeling particularly Scroogish about the whole business this year, so I took my dinner, a slapdash hoagie on an undersized bun (fast before feast, I suppose), sought refuge in the den, and did not show my face until the merry revellers were ready to leave. Then I sent them off with a resounding, "Bah! Humbug!" which was greeted with much untoward merriment.

"Oh, Daddy," said Stephanie.

"Don't get into the brandy," Joyce warned.

I waved to them from the doorway, then went back inside the house and watched them from the living room window until they had turned a corner and could no longer see the house. Then I turned off the string of colored lights that outlined our front porch, pulled the plug on the Christmas tree, and got into the brandy. Not terribly, for brandy gives a vicious hangover, just enough to make me mellow. Once I was sufficiently mellow, I turned out all the other lights and went to bed.

That was a mistake. Sometimes brandy works, and sometimes it backfires. I don't know that it really was the brandy's fault. The house was so empty, so silent. For the last month I had longed and prayed for silence and solitude, but now that I had it in abundance I found it a hollow and empty state.

And then there was the moon, which had the bad taste to be full on a cloudless cold night. It was a silver-white moon, shining down unshaded on a silver-white earth. Too much, much too much, as if the entire universe had been hung with tinsel. And the light wouldn't stay outside where it belonged; the damned washed-out white light slithered in around gaps in the lined drapes and crawled across the bed to sit glaring on my eyelids and murder sleep. I lay under that light brooding, I don't know why, on the fate of one Jacob Marley, dead nearly a century and a half.

Finally giving up the struggle, I crept out from under the electric blanket, shrugged on my slippers and went downstairs. The moonlight followed me, illuminating the stairs and the wide entrance hall. The living room curtains were sheer and generously invited all the moonlight in the vicinity inside, as to a silver-white open house. The Christmas tree stood

before the large bay window looking tacky as only an unlighted Christmas tree can. The trees outside, undecorated even by their own natural foliage, silhouetted by the overpowering moonlight, appeared like black spectres, skeletal, ominous. I turned quickly about, went into my study across the hall, closed the door, drew the drapes, and turned on the comfortably warm yellow reading lamp.

The third shelf of the bookcase that lined one wall held a handsome leather bound set of the complete works of Dickens, an inheritance from my grandfather that I had not bothered for years. I took out the volume titled *Christmas Stories* and settled back in my recliner, opened it, and read aloud softly into the moonlight.

"Marley was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that."

"Amen say I to that," declared a voice deep as the Pit, yet thin as a breath. I jumped up with a cry, dropping the book. In front of me stood the ghost of Jacob Marley, exactly as Dickens had described it, a tall stocky man in waistcoat and boots dragging along with him a large wrought iron chain to which ledgers, keys, padlocks, purses, and the like were attached every few links, like

charms on a bracelet. He was so transparent that I could read through him the titles of my grandfather's set of Dickens on the bookshelf behind him.

"What the hell?" I cried, realizing as the words left my mouth how absurdly un-Dickensian they sounded. The apparition did not crack a smile, prevented perhaps by a strip of white cloth bound around its head from jaw to balding crown.

"Marley, sir," he said. "Jacob Marley."

He offered his transparent hand, and I automatically held my own out to shake, then drew back.

"With all due respect, Mr. Marley," I said, my voice admittedly a little tremulous, "this is very absurd. What do you want with me, anyway? God knows, I keep Christmas. Look at that damned tree out there. It must have a pound of tinsel on it. Do you know that I actually sing along at the elementary Christmas program sing-along? That's keeping Christmas with a vengeance."

"Keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine," the Ghost said illogically.

"By scaring the living daylight out of innocent people in the middle of the night?"

The Ghost sighed. "I am doomed to wander through the

world trying to do the good I failed to do in life."

"What possible good could you do me?"

"I would lay you," replied the Ghost.

I said, "Good God," and sat down quickly. My chair of its own will flew back into the reclining position, pitching me back with a jarring thump. I closed my eyes and tried to bring order to my gyrating thoughts. It was possible, of course, that all this time I was safe and asleep under the warmth of the electric blanket and the influence of a slight overdose of brandy, dreaming. Or my subconscious had finally won the battle for my mind, and I was hallucinating in the den, enthroned like some mad king on my recliner, where I couldn't do anyone much harm. But, being a rational person, even in the worst extremity, I expect my hallucinations to be consistent and make sense.

"I think you have that wrong, Jacob," I said very quietly, wondering if it might be wiser to attempt to wake myself rather than waste intellectual energy reasoning with a trick of the right brain. On the other hand, I was a little afraid I would find that I was not asleep at all. "As you are the ghost, I ought to be laying you."

"If you could, I should be most

grateful," Marley's Ghost said courteously. "For you see, though you are in the flesh and I in the spirit, we share a common affliction. We do not find rest in the night."

"Well, if someone would turn the moon down, I might be able to get some sleep."

"You walk the night only when the moon is full?" the Ghost asked. "I do not think so."

"Well, a little darkness might help. I don't know why the hell I can't sleep. If the story runs true, you can't rest because you were a miserable, stingy bastard in life, and now you have to go around scaring other miserable, stingy bastards into playing Santa Claus. If that's what you're after here, you certainly picked the wrong house."

"I came here because you thought of me," said Marley's Ghost. "It is the thought of me that keeps you awake. You have asked a question that has never been asked before, not even by he who created me. To lay you is an easy matter; we must simply find the answer to your question."

I looked at the shade in astonishment. "Surely you know what you died of?"

He shook his head. "I exist only to the degree in which I have been thought about. He who created me did not think about the manner of my death;

therefore the manner of my death did not exist, at least not until you inquired into it."

"I wasn't all that interested," I grumbled. "I was just making conversation."

"If you were just making conversation, how is it that you do not sleep?"

"Damned if I know."

The Ghost shuddered, causing his chain to roll thuddingly along the carpeting. "My dear sir, I beseech you. Avoid that expression. As it stands you have aroused my curiosity, and since for whatever reason we have both been deprived of our repose this Christmas Eve, we might amusingly and perhaps profitably pass the time exploring the mystery, eh?"

I shrugged. "Why don't you go on without me? I think I'm going to mosey on back to bed."

I got up and started to move past him, but his transparent hand caught my forearm in a remarkably strong grip.

"Come now, my dear fellow, don't be hasty. I cannot travel alone, incorporeal as I am, and a very minor ghost at that. I must justify any journey that I make like some otherworldly civil servant, and you could be my justification. Besides I was a man of business and had not the imagination to solve mysteries. You could be of much assistance."



"And what do I get out of it?"

"Unless I am much mistaken, my dear sir," said Marley's Ghost, "you are not the sort of fellow who sleeps well on an empty belly or an unanswered question. What I offer you is a rare opportunity to travel through time, to observe the world as it was and will never be again. You have in your secret heart longed to be a detective and solve some great mystery; here is your chance, perhaps your only chance, to fulfill that wish. Corporeal life, believe me, is woefully short. There is much time on this side to regret lost opportunities."

I walked slowly back to the recliner and sat down.

"You probably died of a heart attack or a stroke or—or food poisoning."

"You do not see it that way," said Marley's Ghost, "so that is not the way it will be."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean, my dear sir, that you are the author."

He picked up the tooled leather volume from the floor where I had dropped it and handed it to me. I pushed the chair into the reclining position and began to read aloud. The Ghost, leaning on the back of the chair, looked over my shoulder at his own likeness in a reproduction of the original engraving.

"Marley was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it, and Scrooge's name was good. . . ."

A reclining chair is not the best place for reading; it is too comfortable. I have often dropped into a doze even while reading some remarkable thriller, so it is not so awfully strange that I did so now. I was startled into wakefulness by the resonant striking of the hour, twelve. That did not seem so awfully strange either, until it occurred to me that we do not have a clock that strikes the hour.

I sat up quickly, jerking the chair upright. The moonlight, it appeared, had taken over my den, touching everything in it with a silver glow of tinsel. And directly in front of me, in the place where old Marley had first appeared, stood my daughter Stephanie, in the billowy Christmas angel gown, her light brown hair caught in a circlet of holly, a mysterious half smile on her lips. The tinsel moonlight reflected off her in such a way that she appeared to glow.

I struggled to regain my equilibrium.

"Back from Mass already, hon?"

"I am the Ghost of Christmas Past," she said in that voice of wind-rattled icicles that made me shudder.

"My past?" I decided to play along.

"No. Long past. Come, my time is short."

"As is your stature."

I fully expected the usual, "Oh, Daddy," but got instead an outstretched hand and a calm but firm order.

"Rise! and walk with me!"

"No thanks, hon . . ." I started to say, but then saw that the beckoning hand was transparent and slightly iridescent. I shrank back against the Nau-gahyde upholstery of the chair, my cold, but quite opaque, hands firmly gripping the armrests. "M-must I?"

The apparition, so like yet so unlike my daughter, shook its shining head solemnly, and little sparkles of tinsel floated in the air around it.

"You are under no compulsion and may decline, without retribution, to accompany me. Though it is strange that you would do so, as you are one of the fortunate ones who is spared the painful journey into your own past. What you are being offered is an opportunity offered to few, to visit a past that is not your own, simply for the satisfaction of your curiosity."

"Really? No strings at-

tached? No moral?"

The Spirit's slight smile broadened just a trifle. "Few journeys are made in what you call the 'real world' without something being learned. You will be shown things; what you do with them is your business. The opportunity will not arise again. Come with me now, or close the book forever."

I am a man incapable of passing an open door without peering into the room, so this challenge left me no choice but to accept it. I grasped the Spirit's hand, surprised to find that it felt like solid flesh. Its grip was, indeed, very strong, pulling me up abruptly from my chair and leading me through the den and across the hall to the silver-bathed living room. I can well remember Steffy in the flesh dragging me from the comfort of the den with this same eagerness to see the decorated tree. I saw it now, shining in the moonlight, and it seemed larger, fuller, more brilliant and, goodness knows, gaudier, than it had before.

"Where are you taking me?" I asked as we hastened toward the bay window.

"London, December 24, 1836." It spoke in the tone and manner of the narrative voice that so often opens cheaply made historical or science fiction films. The date, seven years prior to

the publication of *A Christmas Carol*, reminded me all of a sudden of the purpose of my journey.

"Wait, where's old Marley?"

"Right with you, my dear sir."

And there he was indeed, peering over my left shoulder, bandage and all; apparently he had been there, unnoticed, the whole time. Now he grasped my left hand, and together the three of us passed through the bay window's leaded panes. I felt the solid glass brush past me like the strips of a beaded curtain.

I had closed my eyes as I approached the window and did not open them at first when I felt the cold outside air. For one thing the air itself felt different, damp and chilly rather than sharp and crisp. And all about me was a confusion of noise and smells. So many smells: coal fires smoking, gas fumes, old fish, beer, sewage, sweat, and then rising above all this the sweet, pungent odor of mince pie. I stood for a moment in wonder, my head raised like that of a hound downwind of a herd of deer, just sniffing. Then I had the strange, vaguely unpleasant, sensation of someone passing through me, as if I were a beaded curtain, and I opened my eyes.

I knew at once where I was,

for I had been there before, in the City of London late on a winter afternoon, at a busy intersection just east of those three brooding stone edifices that form the hub around which the ancient city spins: the Bank of England, the Mansion House, and the Royal Exchange. I marvelled at how similar the scene was to the one I had enjoyed in my student days, watching schools of office workers crowding down the old streets through the early twilight into underground and railway stations. And yet, as I recovered from the shock of finding myself in that well remembered spot, I saw it all as very familiar yet marvelously strange.

Leadenhall, that was the name of the street, between two churches, St. Michael Cornhill to the west, its stolid, rectangular, pinnaced tower standing out above everything, and to the east St. Andrew Undershaft, the site, it is said, in older times of a gigantic maypole. It is the churches, the ubiquitous churches, that give the City of London its illusion of timelessness. The London I now stood in was older, dirtier, noisier, and even more charming than the one I had known.

I am a city person, revelling in the urban rush and clutter and racket. But this was almost too much city for even me, noisy

beyond belief, with the clatter of donkey carts and hackneys and great lumbering omnibuses over the stone paving, the shouts of peddlers urging their wares on the passersby, and the intermittent clanging of bells. I counted the chimes of the hour coming from St. Michael's tower with some surprise. It was only three o'clock, yet it was dark enough for the gas lamps to be lighted. The air was thick with an oppressive dark green smog that penetrated everywhere but softened the roughness of the street life as if wrapping it in gray-green chiffon.

I was finding it difficult to see, a problem the natural inhabitants of the place seemed to have overcome, and blundered into a young woman who materialized suddenly out of the fog, hurrying along the street, a dark knit shawl wrapped around her striped silk gown, a wide-brimmed bonnet shielding her face. I got a look at it, though, a pretty, child-like, bright-eyed face set with a grimness that seemed contrary to its nature. I attempted to excuse myself, but realized, when the stack of petticoats rustled right through my astonished leg, that apologies were not just unnecessary, they were downright useless.

I fell in step beside her, curious about where she might be

going and why she was so nervous. Invisibility, by the way, is a very useful attribute to have in a crowded city street, especially when trying to keep up with someone who is in a great hurry and doesn't even know you're there. I was enjoying myself thoroughly, drinking in the wonderful grimy aliveness of the city, feeling the rush and the gaiety, observing with delight the sideshow of strange and colorful characters free in their anonymity. I took pleasure now and then as I hurried through (literally) the crowds in playing childish "invisible man" games, swinging unseen from a lamppost and passing right through the polished brass "can" of a baked potato vendor stationed on the pavement in the shelter of Whittington Avenue as it leads into the old Leadenhall Market. I must have caused a bit of a breeze, for the coals in the iron firepot suspended beneath the large, showy receptacle shot up in a sudden surge of orange flame and died down. Then I remembered Marley and the superstition that flames rise in the presence of ghosts.

"Sorry about that," I said over my shoulder but saw only the Ghost of Christmas Past helping the hot potato man get the conflagration under control before his primitive steam ta-



ble blew up. Marley had hurried on ahead through the confusion of the great poultry market.

"Where are you going?" I shouted over the racket of hundreds of chickens, turkeys, geese, ducks, and, for all I know, dodos and emus, bewailing their fate in the overcrowded condemned cells of the market, a Dickensian slum for poultry if ever there was one. A group of three or four very dirty, ragged boys hoarsely chanting some tuneless carol passed through me, surrounding the potato vendor in an effort to take advantage of the generosity of his clients and the warmth of his fire.

"My chambers," Marley panted, pointing vaguely toward the street ahead of us. "I lived there, and still do, in a way of speaking, in the wine cellars."

"Nice work if you can get it," I murmured.

I followed the Ghost down a narrow byway along the back wall of a great stone house, relieved to be free of the feathered bedlam of the poultry market. We came out on a street of large, impressive buildings only slightly less congested than the thoroughfare, and Marley's Ghost, apparently oblivious to the chill drizzle of sleet that was beginning to fall from the

gunmetal gray sky, and the black city mud splashed up from the street by passing hooves and bare metal wheels, jaywalked joyously across toward a narrow courtyard almost hidden between two buildings. I hesitated a moment before following him into that nineteenth century rush hour, for I still did not quite trust my bodiless condition.

A light touch on my arm caused me to turn. The Ghost of Christmas Past, disguised as my daughter Stephanie, pointed northward along the side of the great stone house.

"East India House. Torn down in 1862. You ought to have a look at the front portico facing Leadenhall Street. You will have seen something no person living has seen."

That sort of exclusiveness holds little appeal for me. I was much more interested in exploring Marley's wine cellars, but something else facing Leadenhall Street did catch my interest. A nervous young woman in a striped silk dress and a dark shawl and bonnet had just crossed the thoroughfare and was turning north by the soot-stained gothic church of St. Andrew Undershaft.

"Hey, Marley! Up this way!" I shouted. "I want to see where that girl's going."

He followed me with an obe-

dience I have yet to inspire in the living.

"May I presume to ask why we are stalking this particular person?" he asked when he had caught up.

"I don't know, really. It's just a hunch. Good detectives always follow hunches."

Crossing Leadenhall at that hour was dangerous and indeed all but impossible for ordinary mortals, but we floated easily through hansom cabs and hackney coaches, piemen and holly decorated donkey carts. We followed the girl northward past aging mansions and half timbered Elizabethan relics into an area of small shops with living quarters above them.

"Where are we?" I asked Marley.

"Simmery Axe."

St. Mary Axe, I translated. English place names are marvelous and their pronunciation even more marvelous. I couldn't say at first how I happened to know this particular pronunciation, but a song began to run through my head as I trotted up the pavement in pursuit of my hunch.

"Oh! my name is John Wellington Wells,

I'm a dealer in magic and spells,

In blessings and curses.

And ever-filled purses,

In prophecies, witches and knells."

Gilbert and Sullivan, wasn't it? I used to know all the words to most of the patter songs when I was younger and could sing after a fashion. The clatter of the horses and the rhythmic clanging of a muffin man's bell formed an accompaniment, and I sang aloud, safe in the realization that no mortal ear could hear me. Marley, however, regarded me with some pain.

"If you want a proud foe to 'make tracks'—

If you'd melt a rich uncle in wax—

You've but to look in

On our resident Djinn,

Number seventy Simmery Axe!"

Good Lord. I stopped abruptly in front of one of the small shabby shops, for the girl in the bonnet had stopped and was looking uncertainly at it. The stone front was black, as was the door. The bowed windows—meant, I suppose, to display wares—were so soot begrimed as to appear black as well. The uncertain flicker of candles inside the shop only helped to obscure the view. I looked up. Over door and window in polished brass letters was the name of the shop, with

the number 70 set like quotation marks at each end.

70 J.W. WELLS & CO.,  
SORCERERS 70

I started to laugh. The whole thing was so preposterous. I was not used to having such literary dreams. But this was stuff I knew about, and I couldn't let a gaffe like that pass.

"I'm sorry," I said to Christmas Past, who still floated on my right. "You just can't do that."

"I beg your pardon?" said the courteous Spirit.

"Anachronism. Blatant, baldfaced anachronism. Gilbert wrote *The Sorcerer* in 1877. This is supposed to be the London of 1836. Gilbert was born in 1836! Now, how do you explain that away?"

"Elementary," said the Ghost. "It's an old established family firm. The present proprietor is Gilbert's sorcerer's grandfather."

"That's ridiculous. How could the company exist before its author invented it? You can't do that, even in fiction."

"You can do anything in fiction as long as you're consistent," the Ghost explained with a great show of patience. "And once something, a place, a character, is conceived, it acquires an existence of its own—a past,

a present, and a future."

I laughed. "What a cop-out. Are you trying to tell me there's no difference between flesh-and-blood historical reality and — and the figment of somebody's imagination?"

"My dear sir," the Spirit replied, "we are all figments of Somebody's imagination."

That's what you get for arguing with a ghost.

I returned to my hunch.

The girl, after taking another quick, frightened look about her, entered the shop, activating a tinkly little bell. I followed, passing through the door after she had closed it, just for the thrill of doing it that way while I could. After all, I'm going to have to open doors for the rest of my life.

The inside of the shop was as dark as the outside, and the soot-saturated fog seemed to have passed through the closed door and filled every crevice. What little I could see through this miasma looked like a combination of old fashioned hardware store and the sort of cheap magic tricks emporium found on seaside boardwalks between the penny arcade and the bingo parlor. A small, round, bald man wearing a blue herringbone checked waistcoat over a pink shirt looked up from behind a low wooden counter where he sat playing solitaire

with a set of ancient tarot cards by the light of a close-trimmed oil lamp. A meagre coal fire provided the only other light.

"And what may I do for you, madam?" he asked the girl in a carefully smoothed down cockney accent. His face was pink, his smile somewhat cherubic; his voice was oily and self-deprecating, a pudgy Uriah Heep.

The girl's hand, when she removed it from her fur muff, was trembling, and her voice was thin and strained with tension.

"I—I've come for the—uh—the effigy."

The proprietor raised his spectacles to the top of his head and looked carefully into her face for perhaps half a minute.

"Ah, yes," he said slowly. "Mr. Scrooge."

He spun around to face a cluttered shelf on the wall behind his desk, although I have no idea how he did it, since the chair did not swivel.

"Ah, here we are. Mr. Scrooge."

He took down a cylindrical package wrapped in newspaper like an order of chips and handed it to her. She took it gingerly and stared at it a moment.

"Oh, dear. How dreadful. I don't know how I could do this."

J.W. Wells smiled slightly. "The first time is always the hardest."

"Oh, dear," the girl cried in agitation. "I certainly shan't be doing this again. It's not for me, you know. I never could do such a thing for my own gain. It's for Fred, poor dear Fred. He hasn't a farthing, and it's so dreadfully unfair."

"And if dear Fred 'asn't a farthing, he can't marry you, eh?"

The girl lowered her head. "He hasn't asked me yet."

"He 'asn't? Bless my soul."

The little shopkeeper chuckled, catching the girl's hand in a quick, gentle, but firm movement. "Come now, let's see what we 'ave here." He took the package from her hand and spread the palm out under the lamp, raising the wick just a trifle. "Now this is very nice, don't you see? Such a lovely long life line. I see marriage, but not so soon. No matter, it's a very fine hand: happiness, many children, prosperity in due time. Be patient, say the Stars, your time will come."

He released her hand and placed the package back into it.

"A Christmas gift for poor, dear Fred. That'll come to five quid, madam, and a bob for the reading. For you. Regular clients I charge 'arf a crown."

"Oh." She fumbled in her muff and pulled out a small purse from which she carefully counted out coins.

"You're sùre this is Mr.



Scrooge?" she asked, staring at the little package. "Do you know Mr. Scrooge?"

The chuckle was less cherubic, more malevolent. "Know Mr. Scrooge? My dear lady, there's not a chap within the sound of Bow bells that don't know Mr. Scrooge, more's the pity. His chambers being just over the way, I'm privileged sometimes to share the street with 'im. 'Mr. Scrooge?' says I and tips me hat. 'Umph,' says he, if he says anything at all. Not a kindly man, our Mr. Scrooge." He leaned over the counter familiarly. "It's a favor we're doing this old town, you and me."

The girl shuddered and drew back. "For Fred," she whispered. "Just for Fred. What do I do with it?"

"Set it in the fire, madam, saying these words . . ." He drew her face close to his and whispered a series of phrases in her ear which I, though I leaned close, could not make out. "You've got that now? Good. Wouldn't you care to have a look at it? It's a marvelous likeness, I must say."

"Oh no. I couldn't bear it. I'd rather not know what he looked—looks like."

She secreted the package in her muff and ran from the shop, the bell on the door tinkling in her wake.

"Thank you very much, and

a Merry Christmas to you," the shopkeeper called. "And a Merry Christmas to Fred, the lucky fellow."

I passed through the closed door just as the great bell of St. Andrew Undershaft boomed the hour of four. The sky was dark, what sky could be seen, but the street was bright with torches and gaslights. Marley materialized beside me.

"Who is this Fred?" he asked.

"Scrooge's nephew."

"Oh yes, that dreadfully jolly young fellow who came around to the counting house every Christmas Eve, spreading cheer, like marzipan, all over everything. Scrooge assumed he was after his money. But I don't recognize her. Who is she, and what's she up to?"

"She's Scrooge's niece-in-law to be, I think. And, if I'm not mistaken, she's attempting to melt a rich uncle in wax, so to speak. Come on."

I pushed through the crowd, for I was losing my hunch. Suddenly there was a diversion on the southwest corner of Leadenhall Street, in front of the brashly neoclassic facade of East India House. Two slightly drunken porters had collided and were now settling the question of right-of-way with bare fists. The nearby market emptied into the street to join the melee. I passed through the

center of the mob, having caught sight of a dark bonnet disappearing down Whittington Avenue. Then I saw her standing in front of the brass baked potato can temporarily left untended. She looked around, white-faced, then quickly threw her package onto the glowing coals of the firepot and fled westward.

By the time I reached the vessel the paper had burst into yellow flame and shrivelled to a blackened crust, and the wax effigy itself was starting to melt. It was a rather horrid sight, as recognizable human features began to run together. Recognizable indeed, for it was a good likeness, a perfect likeness of Jacob Marley.

"Hey!" I called to the girl's rapidly retreating back, forgetting my ghostly state. "You hexed the wrong man!"

The effigy was beginning to melt rapidly, and I put my hand into the pot, attempting to retrieve it. A firm, transparent grip on my wrist prevented me.

"You are free to observe only," said the Ghost of Christmas Past, "not to intervene. The past cannot be altered, even in fiction."

So we stood, three ill-matched spectres in the sooty darkness as snow began to fall lightly over the scene, watching the effigy slowly dissolve and run

in rivulets of molten wax around and between the hot coals.

"I don't understand," said Marley's Ghost.

"It's a form of black magic," I explained. "A wax image of the victim is slowly melted with appropriate curses or whatever."

"That bright-eyed, dimpled, fresh-faced child involved in such dark deeds? I find that difficult to comprehend."

"She was driven to it by necessity, I think."

"Oh?" Marley's Ghost was puzzled. "Not by me, surely."

"No. By your partner. She wants to marry Fred, you see, as in time she will and make him very happy. And I suppose in time she will also secretly be glad that her attempt at witchcraft failed. It wasn't her fault, of course, that it did, or the sorcerer's either. Apparently he mistook you for Scrooge. I gather you sometimes answered to the name of Scrooge, as it is written of him: 'Sometimes people . . . called Scrooge Scrooge and sometimes Marley, but he answered to both names: it was all the same to him.'"

Marley's Ghost nodded solemnly, his jaws clacking together under the white bandage.

"We were like that, as it were one person in two bodies. It was also a device for keeping clients guessing. If an unwanted sol-

icator asked for Mr. Marley, he would be out for the day. I would be Mr. Scrooge. It was something of a game, I venture."

"A game that cost you your life."

Just at that moment Marley's Ghost gave a gasp and backed into the baked potato can, pointing at something with a trembling finger. Following his gesture I saw Marley himself, in the flesh, a solid identical twin of my companion of the evening in all aspects except the bandage, stumbling eastward, somewhat unsteady on his feet, as though the curse had already begun to take effect. He tripped on a loose paving stone and fell through me, catching himself on the large round handle of the can. He leaned on it an instant to get his balance and inadvertently looked down into the glowing coals of the fire pot. The effigy had melted from the back of the head forward and the face now spread over the coals like a projected relief map. I tried to shield Marley from the sight, but of course he saw through me, as many do. With a cry the poor fellow staggered back, holding his chest, took three steps forward, and fell. We three stood there, helpless in our insubstantiality, and watched a crowd gather around the stricken man,

make a corridor for a doctor to come through, and then close up again around him, and after a while six strong men, like premature pallbearers, carried the dying man down the street to his chambers. For though some of the bystanders weren't certain whether this was Mr. Scrooge or Mr. Marley, all knew that he was one of those gentlemen and that his home was above the wine cellars and offices in the old dark house in the courtyard off Lime Street.

Chimes sounded again from the tower of St. Andrew's Church. It must be six, I reasoned. The great bell tolled once and fell silent. I waited, straining in the sudden oppressive silence for the bell to go on. But it did not. All was darkness and stillness around me, and I was alone. Where was I now? In Scrooge's dark chambers above the wine cellars and holiday vacant offices? He could not have been more alone than I was. I sat back, for wherever I was, I was sitting, and wished fervently for companionship, longed to hear the ominous clank of chains, to see some otherworldly luminosity break through the terrible blackness. Then I knew what was Scrooge's curse, and Marley's, to be alone and lonely on Christmas.

In the distance I heard voices, faint but growing stronger. The

voices surely of an angel choir sent to redeem my hardened soul. I welcomed it as it drew near.

"God rest ye merry, gentlemen,

Let nothing you dismay.

Remember Christ our Savior  
Was born on Christmas Day  
To save us all from Satan's  
pow'r

When we were gone astray.

O tidings of comfort and joy!

Comfort and joy! O tidings of  
comfort and joy!"

With a rush of comfort and joy I realized that I was in my recliner in the den and the angelic choir was Joyce and the kids coming home from Midnight Mass, strewing vocal tinsel through the dark world as they came.

I stumbled to my feet, groping for a light switch. I must turn the decorations on again before they got back. I had suddenly lost all desire to be mistaken for Scrooge. I felt along the wall, falling into bookcases and knocking over bric-a-brac. The singing was coming closer.

"Glad tidings we bring  
To you and your kin—  
Glad tidings of Christmas  
And a Happy New Year!"

My hand was on the knob, and I pulled the door open. Light, brilliant, festive, many-colored, twinkling, clashing, gaudy Christmas light filled the living room and glowed from the porch. The lights had come on, how or why I did not know, but I thanked the Ghost of Christmas Present, who surely must have been.

The front door burst open, and there were my wife and children, bright and glowing in the light of the outdoor decorations. And I was glad to see them.

Standing like a young orator on the hall carpet, shaking off snow like tinsel, Mark spread out his arms and crowed.

"God bless us every one!"

"Amen say I to that," I answered, turning back to the den just long enough to pick up and carefully close the book that lay on the floor still open to the picture of Marley's Ghost, before I joined the family around the misplaced, overburdened tree in the living room.

"Shall I light the candles?" Joyce asked.

"No, no," I said. "Don't do that."

"There's light enough already, light enough."

And I kissed her quickly, under the mistletoe.

# One false Move...

...and you may miss the greatest masters of mystery and romantic suspense!

Choose any one collection—only \$1.00

You know all too well what's at stake. Your body starts to tense. Your brow dampens. You can hear your own heartbeat pounding. What you do in the next few minutes will make the difference...can you afford a false move?

Turn the cover of just one of the spine-chilling mystery collections from Ellery Queen's Mystery Club and enter a world of suspense, danger or romance. A world where the great masters like Hitchcock, Queen, Barbara Michaels, and Velda Johnston live. Authors whose stories have kept readers bound to their pages. These authors and their tales can be yours for less than publishers' list prices. And for a special introduction we will send you any of the collections below for only \$1.00, plus shipping.

Make the right move now. There's no mystery to how our club works. Send no money, just fill in the coupon below and send to Ellery Queen's Mystery Club, Roslyn, N.Y. 11576.

## ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY CLUB

ROSLYN, N.Y. 11576

Yes. Please enroll me as a member and rush me the collection checked below. I enclose no money now. After 10 days' examination, I will either keep the book and pay \$1.00 plus shipping, or I'll return it. As a member, I will receive seven times a year, advance descriptions of future selections, currently at \$7.95 plus shipping, and may reject any I do not want, in advance. If I am not satisfied I may return any book within 21 days and owe nothing. I may cancel membership at any time with no obligation.

Check only one selection below:

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ellery Queen—<br>Circumstantial Evidence | <input type="checkbox"/> Alfred Hitchcock—<br>Tales to Fill You with Fear   | <input type="checkbox"/> The Love Talker<br>By Elizabeth Peters           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ellery Queen—<br>Veils of Mystery        | <input type="checkbox"/> Alfred Hitchcock—<br>Tales to Scare You Stiff      | <input type="checkbox"/> The Walker in Shadows<br>By Barbara Michaels     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ellery Queen—<br>Wings of Mystery        | <input type="checkbox"/> Alfred Hitchcock—<br>Tales to be Read with Caution | <input type="checkbox"/> A Presence in an Empty Room<br>By Velda Johnston |

Mr./Mrs./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_

(Please print clearly)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Members accepted in U.S. and Canada only. Offer slightly different in Canada.

E04H2Q

2 - AV

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG  
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FICTION

# Cinnamon



*Illustration by Ken Boroughs*



# Twist

by  
T. Robin  
Kantner



**I**t hit me as I went through the door. The smell: eggs, butter, onions, sharp cheddar cheese. I smiled. Under construction: one fantastic omelette. Had to be Cinnamon.

I called her as I walked through the living room. No answer; the apartment was totally silent. I followed the delicious smell into the kitchen. The omelette was there, steaming invitingly on a plate sitting next to the used skillet on the stove.

The bathroom was empty, too. I retraced my steps into the living room, unable to imagine

why she'd have taken off after preparing a meal. For the record, I went into the bedroom, which was also empty and apparently untouched. Just on the off-chance I checked the walk-in closet. There I found Cinnamon, hanger twisted round her neck, hanging from the high rod between the only two suits I own.

**"N**ow tell me again where you say you were while Miss—uh—Grajewski was being murdered," Jack Hatfield said in his bored, sleepy voice.

I wasn't exactly among friends. Besides me and Hatfield, the tiny, stiflingly hot Belleville police interrogation room was dense with dark-suited people: two of Hatfield's plainclothes flunkies as well as Bob Crum, my thin, long-haired, hyperkinetic young attorney.

"Mowing the lawn," I repeated. Crum's bright eyes darted between me and Hatfield; I figured I would talk until I got a signal from him.

Hatfield leaned back and rasped, "Now how come you were doing that? You bein' maintenance supervisor and all."

"The regular lawn guy didn't show. He's a lazy bum. I got out there because it had to get done, since it's summer and all."

Hatfield's sleepy eyes glanced

down at the bent, tattered steno pad on his lap. "Name of Feenstra, you say. We'll check him out, see if he backs you up." He stretched his arms and made a face-breaking yawn. Voice hollow, he said, "This Cinnamon—uh—Grajewski a good friend of yours?"

I glanced at Crum, who narrowed his eyes at me, telling me to be careful. "Acquaintance. Long-time acquaintance."

Hatfield gave me an appraising look. He's a big, lumpy pear of a man and Belleville's chief of detectives. He was in his late fifties by then, a gray sweaty fellow with a burr cut, bleary eyes, big heavily veined hands, stumpy spitty cigar stuck between his big lips and—like the old-school cop he is—a gray snap-brim hat on his blocklike head. He said, "Security guard over there says she checked through his gate about nine. You put out the squeal about nine forty-five. You say you didn't see her at all, until you found her in your closet?"

"I didn't even know she was there. Or coming. I was doing lawn work, like I told you. Somebody had to have seen me out there."

"We'll ask around," Hatfield said dryly. "Now suppose you tell us about you and Miss—uh—Grajewski. From day one. Go on, we've got lots

and lots of time.”

Hatfield adjusted his flabby body to get more comfortable in the hard wood chair. Bob Crum gave me an imperceptible shrug. I found myself examining his face for zits. He wasn't much past that stage, believe me. Just my luck, pulled in on a murder beef and my lawyer sends his rookie kid to take care of me. . . .

For the third time I gave them the story. Cinnamon and I met in Denver in early 1972. I did some wandering there for about a year after my job as a top union aide blew up with a federal racketeering investigation that nearly got me thrown in jail. Sick to death of Detroit and without a job, or prospects for one, I had sold what I had, tapped my Uncle Dan for a few bucks, and headed west, riding buses, trains, and my thumb, doing the odd job here and there and never staying in one place for very long.

By the time I got to Denver, I knew I was headed back to Detroit sooner or later. I still had a lot of friends who were grateful that I hadn't gone the snitch route during the investigation, and I got the word that they were looking for work for me. So I hung around Denver, basically waiting for the phone to ring, and spent a lot of time at a tavern called the Boar's

Head Inn.

It was a dark noisy place, redolent of beer and whisky and burgers, and it boomed with rock-and-roll music from noon to midnight. Cinnamon Grajewski was a waitress and barmaid there and she worked the closing shift. We started chatting in the wee hours of the morning while the place was closing up for the night. I liked her right off. Despite her mouthful of a last name, she insisted she was three-quarters Irish, and her looks bore this out. She was short, skinny, red-haired and freckled; her figure was outstanding and her eyes were a deep blue that was visible even in the dimness of the bar. She wasn't well-educated—she'd left school at fourteen, she told me—but she had a good instinct for people; she was charming, accessible, relaxed. Plus she was a great cook and had a phenomenal memory for old songs. Many nights, after closing, she'd sit at the piano and bang out discordant accompaniment and we'd sing old 1950's rock-and-roll classics.

It went the inevitable boy-girl route and we spent a couple of nights together. I was on the rebound from a bad breakup back in Detroit, but even so I was sensitive enough to feel that the whole thing was forced and mechanical. We liked each

other—or so it seemed—but the physical part felt obligatory, like we had nowhere to go except to that. After a couple of weeks, it tapered off. I continued hanging around the Boar's Head but Cinnamon and I, while still friendly, went to an arms-length, slightly guarded relationship. I figured that was the end of the whole thing.

Until one night when the bartender at the Boar's Head beckoned me to the phone. It was an emergency room doctor at Denver General. Cinnamon

visits, I told her about my impending return to Detroit and, face so pale her freckles practically leaped off it, she begged me to take her with me. She had no other friends, she said. She didn't want anything to do with the father of her kid. She wanted out. She was pathetic and helpless and, naturally, I said okay.

We flew to Detroit and I helped her get settled. Once here, she really got in gear and took her life into her own hands. She found herself a job at one

---

***After all these years, somebody had set me up real good, and all I had to defend me was a green rookie lawyer.***

---

had been admitted, hemorrhaging severely from a clumsy abortion, and she wanted me.

Just that day The Blob, an upper-level union friend, had called to tell me he had a job worked out for me. It was as maintenance supervisor for a newly opening luxury apartment complex called Norwegian Wood, and he called the job "cake." I had to be back in Detroit in a week.

Cinnamon healed slowly. She was weak and exhausted and seemed scared. On one of my

of the Donut Hole outlets as a counter girl, serving doughnuts, muffins, cinnamon twists, and coffee, and she excelled. In the years that passed she worked herself up to relief manager, then dayshift manager, and finally area supervisor with a good salary and a company car. She took to Detroit and it took to her, and I took enormous pleasure at having helped her work things out so well.

We didn't see each other much. She worked long and odd hours, and I always had some-

thing going. It seemed as if our lives had intersected at a critical moment for both of us and then, time having moved on, our lives moved away from each other again. But the meetings we did have were spontaneous and fun. She listened eagerly to my tales about investigative work, and I got a kick out of hearing her talk about her job and her friends. She got in the habit of dropping in unannounced at my apartment—I'd added her name to my "authorized visitors" list at the security gate, and given her a key—and cooking for me. Mostly she made omelettes, one of my passions, loaded with cheese and onions and spices with hot Italian sausage on the side. I never knew when she'd pop in like this and I never worried about it or about her. We'd been friends, and then lovers, and now, years and events down the road, we'd become friends again.

"How about slap and tickle?" Hatfield rumbled. His two flunkies smiled and Crum gave the old cop a nasty look.

"In Denver only, never after that," I answered.

"How come? Cute little twist like that."

"Just never came up." This gave Hatfield's associates more giggle grist and even Hatfield glared at them. I said earnestly, "Look, chief, I had no reason in

the world to kill her. I hardly ever saw her. I don't even know where she lived, for Chrissake. And if I wanted her dead, I think I'm bright enough to do the job somewhere other than my own apartment."

With a weary sigh, Hatfield straightened in his chair, working the soggy cigar stump around in his mouth. He looked at me through his tiny, deep-sunk eyes. "Let me bounce this off you, Perkins." He nodded at Crum. "And you, counselor. This-here Norwegian Wood place has heavy security. Compound fenced in, security lights and alarms, the works. Guard shack at the gate manned twenty-four hours a day. Only tenants and people with names on the authorized visitor's list are allowed in. Now, Miss—uh—Grajewski comes in this morning. Her name's on *your* list. She goes to *your* apartment, for which she has a key. And she's found dead there. No question that you were on the premises, Perkins. You don't even deny that. You say you were out mowing the lawn, right?" While talking, his face had gone rigid, eyes growing amazingly wide and showing slate gray. "You need a witness to verify you were out there. Not only that, but you need a witness to verify you were out there continuously for nearly

an hour. Now, Mister Ben Perkins, as a man with some investigative experience, would you please advise this tired old cop what *you* would do, in my place?"

I was going to answer, but Crum held out a thin white hand to me, palm out, and said, "Chief Hatfield, the evidence is obviously circumstantial. No jury in the world would—"

"Who's talking jury?" Hatfield boomed, swiveling his body with surprising speed in Crum's direction. The young attorney flinched as if he'd been caught sleeping in class, and I closed my eyes and shook my head: God save us all from rookies. Hatfield went on deliberately: "I'm talking suspicion of murder. Book him, boys."

The city of Belleville doesn't have a jail, just a couple of grubby little holding cells where they pen you up until transporting you to the Wayne County Jail. I paced my cell, feeling numb from the shock of Cinnamon's death and, even more, from the thought of paying my first visit to a real-life prison. After all these years—after all I'd been through. Somebody had set me up real good, and all I had to defend me was a green rookie lawyer. My longtime attorney, since the federal investigation

days, has been Robert Crum, Sr., head partner of a firm with the depressing name of Crum, Cose, Onion & Flatt. But Bob was away on business so I drew his kid, the heir-apparent of the firm who probably, I thought bitterly, got his law diploma from Kellogg's of Battle Creek.

I heard footsteps and young Crum showed up in front of the cell, along with a flint-faced uniformed cop who unlocked the door. Crum said, "You're out, Ben."

I stepped through the door. "What's up?" I asked suspiciously.

He took my arm and led me down the dark hall. "They're releasing you in my custody."

I looked at him with frank curiosity. "How'd you swing that, kid?"

Crum brushed his long brown hair out of his face and said quietly, "Superior legal ability. Brilliant negotiating. Invoking the prestige of our firm. And it didn't hurt any that Wayne County Jail is overcrowded and they won't take people on suspicion charges, particularly first-time offenders. Not that Hatfield didn't try."

We went through a set of swinging doors into the brightly lighted front hallway of the police station.

I said, "Well, that's——"

"But listen." He tightened



his grip on my arm and glanced at me. His face didn't look so zit-prone now. "There's something strange going on here. Hatfield—"

"Shut up a minute." We walked out into the sunshine and across the parking lot to Crum's car, a yellow Toyota with spreading surface rust spots. We got in. Crum left his door open and stretched his legs. "I think Hatfield wants your head on a pole, no matter what."

It took a lot of effort, but I didn't bat an eye. "What gives you that idea, kid?"

Crum stared intently through the filthy windshield. "All he's got on you is circumstantial evidence. No lab reports yet, and those ought to help prove you didn't . . . Listen, Perkins," he said sharply, "Hatfield got some other beef with you, outside of this?"

"Nah, some old stuff maybe, nothing important," I said casually, looking away.

"As your lawyer, I'd better know about it. Or I can't protect you."

Maybe Crum wasn't such a dummy. He'd caught a scent and was confident enough in his instinct to twist my arm about it. I got out a short cork-tipped cigar, lighted it with a wood match, blew a stream of smoke out the open window,

and said, "Remember that protection racket in the department here a couple of years ago? I helped turn it."

"So?"

"I got the word in a rather direct way that Hatfield was upset. When I got the story, he asked—I mean ordered—me to lay off. Said the department takes care of its own, including dealing with its bad apples. Said he didn't want any bad ink on the department."

"But you went public anyway."

"Hell yes. My client was up to his neck in the mess. Either he was going down the toilet, or the crooked cops were. I didn't have any choice."

Crum shook his head somberly. "Hatfield's a good solid pro. I'd never have expected him to do something like this. But listen, Perkins, I just know he's going to do anything he can to nail you. He's going to stay on you like stink on a skunk. So you just take it real easy and let him get his lab reports and do the rest of his investigation. Then if he wants to go for an indictment, we'll fight him there."

"If he wins there," I said quietly, "innocent or not, I could be jammed up in this thing for months. Years."

"Just don't go away," he insisted, "or do anything noisy."

Keep a low profile." He put his key in the ignition and fired up the motor. "I'll stay in touch."

"I may spend a few days out on my uncle's island in Stapfer Lake," I said casually.

"Just so that's in Wayne County." I nodded. "Okay," Crum said, jamming the car into reverse and wheeling out of the parking lot.

**A**s I'd told Hatfield, I didn't know where Cinnamon lived, but it didn't take too much effort to find out. I called the Donut Hole corporate offices in Warren and used the old U.P.S.-delivery-man ploy ("All we've got is a post office box, ma'am, and we need her street address to make delivery. Looks like a real valuable parcel.") and had the address in a twinkling. It was in a condominium development on Rotunda Drive in Dearborn.

But once there I didn't go in right away, since it looked crowded. There was a City of Dearborn black-and-white parked in front and two unmarked Plymouth sedans on either side of it. I parked across the street a little ways down and settled back to wait. After about an hour the door of the condo opened and a uniformed Dearborn city policeman came out, followed by the burly, lumbering Hatfield and his two

anonymous-looking flunkies. As they walked down the sidewalk, I saw a tall, skinny young man standing in the doorway, a shaggy, long-haired blond kid who couldn't have been much over twenty-one. He shut the door as the policemen reached their cars, and then Hatfield, whose demeanor seems about as alert as a sleepy bear's, spotted my car. He fixed me with a long stare, then got in the back seat of one of the Plymouths. The three police cars roared away.

Hatfield wasn't bothered by my appearance. He knew he'd put a tail on me. And so did I.

I walked briskly up to the door and knocked. It opened at once. The skinny kid was shirtless and wore faded jeans that were so tight they clearly revealed his pelvic bones and knobby knees. He wore no shoes. He stared at me emptily and said, "What's up?"

There's a menu of approaches. You have to size up the subject quick and be right the first time. Fortunately, I was. I said, "Perkins," and stepped into the entranceway; the kid stepped back obligingly. "This is where Miss Grajewski lived?"

As I looked around at the elegant furnishings, the kid said, "Yeah, she lived here. What do you want?"

"Just checking around."

"You a cop?" he asked tentatively.

"No. Saw them leave just now. You live here?"

"Yeah," he said with just a bit of defiance. "I lived with her."

"Where were you this morning?"

As I looked at him, he made a toothy, triumphant smile. "At my folk's house in West Bloomfield. The police checked it out. I'm in the clear."

There was an old army duffel bag on the hallway floor, stuffed to bulging. I asked, "Going somewhere?"

"Back home, I guess. No point in hanging around here. Listen, mister, what do you want?"

"Just want to look around, if it's all right with you."

"Why should I care? Just don't take anything."

I gave him a hard look. "Nothing to worry about," I said coldly. He shrugged, turned to the stairs, and trudged up.

Cinnamon lived pretty well, but not excessively so. I checked out the kitchen cupboards and drawers, the pantry, and leafed through each of the some one hundred books on built-in shelves around the fireplace in the living room. When I came back out to the entranceway, the duffel bag was gone, the door standing open, and the

place was silent. So long, kid. Better luck next time.

There were two bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs. One of the bedrooms was completely empty; the other had a big waterbed, a small clean mahogany desk with chair, and a tall matching bureau. The desk drawers had the usual bill and checking account junk in it, but nothing interesting. The clothes closet was jammed full of garments and nothing else. Finally I turned to the bureau. It was literally stuffed with shirts, blouses, undergarments, pants, stockings, and socks, packed in at random in each drawer. In the front of the very bottom drawer was a gray, cheap tin lockbox.

I took it out. It was one of those pseudo-security deals designed to discourage the crime of opportunity with a numerical three-tumbler lock. I could either try each of the possible combinations and be there for the rest of the month, or I could take out my pocket knife and force it open. Long a believer in the wise use of time, I used the knife.

In a way, this was the soul of Cinnamon, a tiny collection of seemingly innocuous articles that were apparently very important to her. There was a small collection of old coins—Lincoln Head pennies

mostly, including the somewhat rare 1931-S in what I judged to be very fine condition. There was a woman's gold ring with a green stone, the year 1966 engraved on the outside along with the letters JFKHS, and inside were the tiny initials CMG.

I rolled the ring around in my hand, thinking about Cinnamon's long-ago comment that she'd left school at fourteen.

I pawed around some more. There was an old Phillips audio cassette with writing on the label that said "Daddy to Cinnamon 4/19/64." There was a cardboard grade school report card that gave her high marks in everything but discipline. There was a picture of the heart-breakingly young Cinnamon wearing an evening gown, standing with a tall, stern-looking young man; I figured it must have been a junior high prom or something. And there was a folded piece of parchment, which, when unfolded, turned out to be a marriage license.

Cinnamon Marie Grajewski. Glenn Milo Griffin. June 8, 1969. It was signed by a Denver judge.

Cinnamon married?

I dumped the contents of the box back into it, shut the lid, put it away, and left.

And began to wonder how in

the world I was going to shake Hatfield's tail.

**I**t was past ten that night before I made the call.

Since getting back to my apartment, I'd had practically nothing but phone calls. Bob Crum called a couple of times, checking up on my whereabouts. Jack Hatfield called once, ostensibly to "clarify a few things," but really to requestion me on the key points of my story, hoping, I guess, to trip me up. He didn't mention having seen me at Cinnamon's place. Carole Somers, who is, as the saying goes, my main squeeze, called, and I gave her the story, making it sound just about as bad as it was. As my friend, she was upset, but as a lawyer, she was intrigued; yet she warned me to be careful and we agreed to get together in a day or two.

When the intense afternoon heat had abated a bit, I went out onto the compound and did some more mowing since Feenstra, our alleged lawn man, hadn't shown up or called.

Finally, after a quick dinner and a leisurely drink, I got comfortable on the couch and called directory assistance for the 303 area code. They gave me the number of the Boar's Head Inn.

As the faraway phone rang, I thought about what I'd found

at Cinnamon's. The high school ring. The marriage license. Two pieces of physical evidence that directly contradicted Cinnamon's stories to me. Of course, she might have divorced this Griffin fellow before meeting me, but I was sure she'd represented herself to me as never having been married.

Something stunk somewhere, and I was beginning to think it was Denver.

The ringing stopped and I heard loud rock-and-roll music, crowd noise, and a hearty, baritone, half-crooked voice say, "Boar's Head, how do?"

"Yeah, who's this?"

"You got Wally, m'man." Wally, whoever he was, was definitely better than half-blitzed. It was difficult to understand his slurring voice with all that racket in the background. "Whoore you? This long dissance?"

"Perkins from Detroit." I had to repeat it before he understood. "Just a couple of questions, if you have a minute. How long you worked there?"

"Since juss after the fire," Wally said proudly.

"Fire? When was that?"

"Aw hell. Harry, when we get torched? . . . Summer, '72," he said carefully.

Hm. "Place hurt bad?"

"Bad? Hell, gone to the groun! They rebuilt her here on El-

mira Bullavard. Hey misser, I know you fr'm somewhere?"

"Sure, Wally," I said easily, "I stop by there whenever I'm in town. You remember that little waitress that worked there, redhead named Cinnamon?"

"Simmon? Cimmanin?" Good thing I didn't ask him to pronounce her *last* name. "Nah, don't ring a bell. Aw hell. Harry, you rememmer any barmaid name Cimmammum? . . . Harry says that was 'fore the fire, too. She work here, took off. Come back last summer for a quick visit, Harry says."

This wasn't getting me much of anywhere, but Wally, in the gregarious, non-sequitur fashion of the jolly drunk, rambled on. "Hell'va thing, that fire. Y'know, they caught the whacko what done it an' stuck him inna giggle house. Let'im out a couple months ago and know what this whacko does? Comes over here forra drink! Ain't that something. You from Dee-troit?"

"You got it. He got out a couple of months ago, you say? About the time Harry says Cinnamon came back for a visit?"

"Bout then, but big deal, right?" Wally said, abruptly getting into an argumentative state. "What could this Cimmammum have to do with that firebug Griffin, anyhow?"

The island is smack in the

middle of Stapfer Lake, one of a chain of lakes formed by a water-control project on the Huron River back in the thirties. It belongs to my Uncle Dan through a fluke in the law that allowed him to retain title to it for his lifetime when the land in the area was condemned for the lake. Uncle Dan is in his eighties, a hundred percent disabled and living in a nursing home, so I take care of the island and the small, primitive shack that sits on a hunk of forested high ground right in the middle.

It's gnat-sized. I mean, blink and you'll miss it.

I was inside, checking the Coleman lantern, oil heater, and food, booze, and fuel supply, when I heard shuffling footsteps coming up the short, narrow path from the western shore. It was Jerry Call, soaking wet, carrying snorkel, mask, and fins, and right on schedule.

And also unhappy. "I been thinking about this, Perkins," he began in his whiny voice as he came in the open door.

I turned on him, hard-faced and wide-eyed. Jerry Call was a tall, husky, balding man in his mid-forties. His watery eyes were those of the consistent loser and boozier, which may or may not have been coincidental; I didn't care. I said, "Backing out now would make me

very unhappy, Jerry."

Call shuffled toward me and dropped his skin-diving gear on the floor. Hand rubbing his bald spot, he said, "Suppose the cops find me here and not you?"

"So what? You don't know anything. You borrowed the shack to do some fishing or something. You don't know where I am. You know nothing about nothing, which is close enough to the truth to make it easy for you."

"I don't like trouble, Perkins," Call said nervously.

"Yeah?" I stood close to him. "Suppose I'd said that when you called me in a lather from the Detroit Plaza that night."

"Didn't need you anyhow. I lost most of the dough before you got there."

"Well, if you'd used your brains and quit playing, then you just might have needed me to escort you and your ten G's out of that room of hacked-off hard cases."

Call shrugged and said weakly, "I don't know what would have happened."

"Point is, you were scared, you called me for help, I agreed and the fee was five hundred bucks which I just happen never to have gotten. You do this deal for me and we're square. Two days here at the most. All you have to do is sit in this shack, do a little swimming, make it



obvious you're here." I picked up an old white Panama hat and jammed it on his head. "For God's sake wear this when you're outside to hide that bald spot. At any kind of distance you look enough like me to pull this thing off."

"Well . . ." Call said, fingering the brim of the hat.

I gestured at the rough cupboards on one of the walls of the one-room shack. "Canned food in those two. Ten gallons of fresh water out the back door. No bathroom or latrine; you'll have to grab a tree and rough it. Propane stove and Coleman lantern over here. Liquor in that last cabinet to the right." I paused, saw his gaze flicker like a shot to that cabinet, and knew I had him hooked. "Just help yourself to anything, Jerry," I said gently, going to the skin-diving equipment and picking it up. I had to get moving. By the time I got the flippers on and mask and snorkel adjusted, the light outside would be gone.

Among the miscalculations I made was the fact that it took me three days—not two—to get to Denver, find out what I needed to know, and get back. The schedule was further fouled up when Call's car threw a rod just outside the Toledo airport and I had to rent a car to get

back to the lake.

It was just about sundown when I got to the end of the dirt road where Call had left his car three days before. I felt right fine as I stripped to my bathing suit and strapped on the diving gear. It had taken quite a bit of effort—people don't just open up and spill their guts like they do on TV—but the research in Denver had paid off nicely. I not only knew who had killed Cinnamon, but I knew him personally. Pretty soon I'd have the chance to settle accounts.

Diving gear in place, I flapped clumsily through the low underbrush to the beach and faced the island across the expanse of rippling water. It should have been a dark clump in the middle of the black lake. Instead, it was blazing like a jewel.

At that distance it was hard to tell, but there seemed to be two police boats there, beaming intense spotlights onto the island, red lights turning ominously atop each. I shook my head once disbelievingly, jammed the mask down over my face, inserted the mouthpiece of my snorkel, and did a running, panicky dive into the lake.

Stapfer was pretty calm that night, but I was tired and sick with worry and it seemed like it took me hours to swim out there. I sloshed ashore on the

north side of the island, the side away from the police boats, and took off the mask and snorkel. The stench of fresh smoke — wood and fuel—hung thick in the air. I dumped the diving gear, stepped out of the fins, and walked barefoot around the island to the boats.

They were actually anchored about fifty yards offshore. Two enormous yellow rubber rafts were drawn up to the beach. In the light of the blinding spotlights I could see Jack Hatfield standing by one of the rafts with a couple of his flunkies. I could also see, up on the center of the island, the burned-out shell of the shack. Some uniformed policemen were poking at the remains with sticks.

As I stepped out into the light, Jack Hatfield looked up and saw me. His flunkies turned and the three of them stared with silly expressions at me for a long, long moment. Then Hatfield raised his voice for the first time in the many years I'd known him and boomed, "Where the HELL were YOU?" He snapped an arm up, pointing to the shack. "And who the HELL was THAT?"

**T**his time we talked in Hatfield's small, windowless, cluttered office at the police station. The flunkies stood around, looking

disappointed; Hatfield leaned back in his wood chair, picking his teeth with a toothpick; Bob Crum sat next to me, straight and alert like a bird dog. I was exhausted from the trip, the swim, and the spectacle of the burned-out shack, but at least I was dressed; Crum had brought a shirt, pants, and tennis shoes for me.

Finally Hatfield's office door opened. A uniformed policeman handed the chief a piece of paper and left after saying quietly, "Hot off the wire, chief."

Hatfield looked at the paper glumly. "So this is him." He showed it to me.

I said, "Yes, that's him."

"Glenn Milo Griffin." Hatfield sighed.

"Also known as Nick Feenstra," I added.

"Yup. Oh heavens yes." He stared distantly at me. "You talked to those nuthouse psychiatrists out there?"

"Among other people," I answered in a level voice while Crum beamed. "Griffin's been in and out of institutions most of his life. Somehow, God knows how, Cinnamon met and married him. Then she found out what a piece of work he was. The doctors told me he beat her regularly. After the third or fourth time she finally got the authorities' attention—you know wife-beating tends to be

ignored—and they recommitted him. That was some months before I met her.

"Now we have to speculate a bit. What I figure happened was, she found out she was pregnant by Griffin. Then she heard they were going to turn him loose after just a couple of months inside. Like I said, wife-beating tends to be viewed as a lesser offense. A husband's right, you see." An edge had come into my voice and Crum gave me a cautioning look. "Anyway, she got desperate as hell. Got herself an abortion by a back-alley butcher and persuaded me to bring her to Detroit, to get completely away from him and start a new life. When he found out she'd disappeared, he torched the Boar's Head. Weird revenge thing, I guess. They recommitted him and kept him inside for a long stretch this time. Until early this summer, when they let him out."

"At which time," Hatfield said listlessly, "he got on the victim's trail and followed her here, fixing to pay her back once and for all. Found out that she came out to Norwegian Wood to visit you now and then. So he got himself a job out there and tried to finish off two birds with one stone by killing her and making it look like you did it."

"But," Crum interjected forcefully, "when Ben was turned loose and went out to his island, Griffin decided to finish him off himself. Fortunately—or unfortunately—for Jerry Call—Ben wasn't there."

Exasperated, Hatfield said, "You just never know how to handle these fruitcake cases. Never can predict 'em. Makes police work impossible sometimes."

Crum leaned forward. "Now I assume, chief, that Ben's off the list for Cinnamon's murder. And that you'll put out the word on Griffin—or Feenstra—and corral him before he makes another try at my client."

Hatfield shrugged. "We'll put out the word, all right, counselor. But he probably thinks he got Perkins on the island. And if he doesn't, he isn't likely to hang around here. He knows there's going to be heat."

"All the same," Crum said firmly, "Mr. Perkins's life is in jeopardy as long as Griffin is at large. I trust we can count on the police department to protect him."

Hatfield's eyes got flinty. "All Belleville residents can count on the police department's protection," he rumbled.

"Yeah, right," Crum said in a neutral voice. He tapped my shoulder. "Let's go, Ben."

"Wait a minute," Hatfield

said as we reached his office door. I turned to him. He said, "You at all sorry about what happened to Call?"

"Sure. But I didn't make him go out there at gunpoint. And I'm not in the least sorry that he got it instead of me. Are you?"

Hatfield didn't answer or change expression.

I wasn't thrilled with the idea that Griffin might make another try at me, but on balance I figured the odds were against it. Crum, on the other hand, was real edgy. He recommended that I get out of the area for a few days, and pounded away at me for so long that I finally gave in. So Carole and I went up to her cottage near Grindstone City on the Lake Huron shore for a few days.

When I returned I got back into the work again. I bore down on a couple of small long-standing matters and wrapped one of them up and bagged a few bucks. And there was always the maintenance supervision work at Norwegian Wood to tend to. I hired a new lawn guy to replace Feenstra/Griffin and fired him after a couple of weeks when I caught him, stoned out of his mind, chasing frogs and snakes through the tall grass near the compound's perimeter on the John Deere

tractor-mower and trying to run them over with the cutting blades.

In other words, for a few weeks at least, business as usual. Except for Bob Crum, who just couldn't let the thing go. He called me a couple of times to report that Griffin hadn't been caught and that Hatfield and his crew weren't exactly killing themselves working on it. He warned me to be careful. Again and again. I tried to calm him down, telling him that Griffin had probably hightailed it for parts unknown—maybe even back to Denver—and that sooner or later someone would get him.

Temporarily without a lawn man again, I found myself mounted on the big, noisy, John Deere monster one Sunday morning, finishing up the northeast perimeter of the compound. It was insufferably hot and humid and I was soaking wet in my T-shirt and jeans by the time I got done. I steered the tractor over toward the equipment shed, reached down, and shifted the cutting blades to the "up" position. The five-horse engine, freed from the cutting blades, flung the beast forward. The equipment shed is about ten by fifteen, made of cheap green dented aluminum and sitting on a concrete slab. It's got a sliding door on the

front and no windows and has been banged into by so many careless lawn men that it looks a lot like a puke-green beer can that someone has mashed square.

I geared down into first and roared at snail's pace toward the opening, which was just wide enough for the tractor to get in. I carefully guided it in, coughing uncontrollably from the thick smoke, the sound reverberating with an awful din off the aluminum walls, and hit the brake. Unfortunately I neglected to hit the clutch, so the thing choked out with a pathetic lurch, leaving my ears ringing in the smoky, dim silence. I shoved the shift into reverse—pure habit from having driven cars for so many years—and started to reach for the key to shut off the ignition.

The sliding door slammed shut behind me, leaving me in almost pure darkness. Before I could react, something thin and strong dropped around my neck and tugged me viciously back against a very powerful body. I gasped in a deep breath and instinctively got my hands up to my neck, thrusting my fingers between the wire and my throat, as the wire started to tighten. I heard heavy, rasping, male breathing behind me as my mind hissed with white noise. The wire began to bite

into my fingers and the soft skin of my neck. He was in no hurry. He was going to do it slowly.

I was holding my breath and didn't dare release it or I probably wouldn't have gotten any air in again. It was pitch-black and acrid-smoky in the shed, a good hundred yards from the nearest building and not on any pedestrian path. He was behind me and out of reach. I needed surprise, a sudden edge, to release the tightening pressure of the wire if even for a second. I remembered that I'd left the ignition of the tractor on—the battery light was glowing red; about the only light in the place—and that, thank God, I had left the Deere in reverse. The starter button was on the steering post near my right knee. Now if only the battery was strong enough—

My lungs were screaming silently for air. The wire had bit through the skin of my fingers like a fine, long, straight razor. I looked down in the darkness toward the steering post, tensed, then slammed my knee against the starter button.

The starter howled, the battery alive with juice. The tractor, in gear and propelled by the starter motor, lunged backward, pinning Griffin's back against the aluminum door. The wire loosened, but not much. I

got my hands more securely in the slack between the wire and my neck and prepared to throw myself off the growling tractor before Griffin could react. And then things happened even faster. As I fought for leverage, my left foot went down involuntarily on the clutch. The engine, freed from the drive wheels and cranked by the starter motor, roared to life. The tractor rolled forward a bit and Griffin renewed his grip with killing force on the wire, cutting into my fingers with pain so sharp I didn't even feel it. I tried to twist my way off the tractor seat and my left foot came off the clutch again. The tractor, engine hot from previous use and idle set high, lunged back against Griffin once more—but this time with the power of five big horses propelling it.

Griffin screamed as the tractor crushed him against the sliding door. It groaned, screeched, buckled, and tore off its track. The wire came loose in my bloody hands as the killer fell backward. In blinding daylight, the sweet smell of freshly mown grass in the air, the tractor roaring back free, I tried for the clutch again to stop the thing, and missed. The Deere lurched as the big studded wheels and undercarriage rolled inexorably over the body below, causing me to lose my balance.

I tumbled off and rolled hard to get out of the monster's path.

The last thing I remember is seeing the John Deere chug backward, pilotless, across the freshly cut lawn in the sunshine. And one of the security guards running madly toward me from the nearest building. And thinking that I didn't want to look at my hands, or at the body a few feet from me.

Carole met me at Wayne General and drove me home. My fingers and palms were masses of gauze bandage, up the palms to the wrists, sort of like The Mummy's gloves. They hurt like hell and I'd refused pain medication at the hospital, figuring that there was better medication to be had at home. As there was. Carole brought me a hefty slug of Jack Daniel's and a tall cold Stroh's and went into the kitchen to do up a steak dinner as I sat limp on the couch.

Hatfield and his boys stopped by the hospital after doing their work at the scene. There wasn't much to be said. Griffin had made his strangling wire from sections of hoe handle and a coat hanger—about as lethal a weapon at close range as there is. The consensus among the policemen was that I'd lucked out. "Nothing runs like a Deere,"



said one of the flunkies, breaking up everyone but me.

I clumsily picked up the shot glass of Jack Daniel's and drank fully half of it. The whisky made its mighty fine fire in my stomach and I let my mind free-wheel, listening absently to the domestic noises coming from the kitchen and smelling the beginning of fried onions and mushrooms. I thought about Cinnamon, the junior high prom picture, the taped letter from Daddy, and the high school ring, the marriage license, and the old, old lies that had come back, as they sometimes do, to get her.

And I thought about Jerry Call and his flaming, lonely death on the island. And Glenn Griffin, with whom I'd never exchanged a personal word in my life, and who nevertheless was the first man I'd ever killed.

I finished the whisky, fumbled the bottle of Stroh's to my lips, and drank. Didn't really matter, I thought. They were all strangers, even poor twisted Cinnamon. Suddenly I wanted to see a movie or something, a planned, dependable, entertaining fantasy. I got up heavily and walked to the big wood

shelving units against the wall to look over my videocassette library. And then I saw that the red light on my Phone-Mate machine was glowing.

The first message was from Bob Crum, sounding older, confident, and angry. "Listen, Ben, call me right away. I talked to an FBI man and he informed me that the alert for Griffin was only issued state-wide. Hatfield never put out a nationwide alert. I think that's blatantly unethical and I want to—" The tape hissed as the thirty-second cut-off hit.

There was one more message. A fat, jolly, drunken voice, backed up by booming rock music and rowdy voices, said, "Hey-hey, ole Ben-boy, this is big Wally. Thought you oughta know that firebug Griffin that torched us way back dropped on by here coupla days ago. I told him you were out here looking him up. He said he'd get back to you. I'da call ya right away 'cept I was on a toot there for—" The tape hissed again.

With a thick bandaged finger I rewound the tape and turned back to the shelf of videocassettes. I smiled. Thanks a lot, Wally. Take care, guy.



Illustration by Rex Lindsey

---

FICTION

# The Embezzler's Christmas Present

by Ennis Duling

**E**ntire mornings could pass at the First National Bank without anyone speaking to Herb Cubbey about anything that wasn't business. Checks were cashed, and money was entered in personal accounts at the window where Herb worked. Customers were rewarded with a nod and a barely audible thank you. At the end of the day his records were always in perfect order.

Twenty-five-year-old Sue Rigney, who worked two windows away, thought that Herb moved around the bank as if he were a frightened herbivore (she liked the pun) in a jungle of meateaters. He might have blended into a paneled wall, his brown bow tie and the pattern of his remaining hair serving as protective coloration.

Like a mouse at the cat's water dish, he poured water for tea, allowed it to steep weakly, and then darted away, leaving only the spore of the tea bag. Sue noticed that he used a tea bag more than once.

Sue had heard the other tellers and the secretaries discussing Herb's personal life. He spent his evenings at home with his widowed mother, and that was the sum of his life. Probably he kept a goldfish, watched the same television shows each week, and made his mother breakfast in bed on Sundays.

The secretaries made occasional jokes about Herb's saintly mother, but he was such little game that they usually found other targets such as the newly appointed assistant manger, Edward Bridgewright, who at thirty-three was exactly Herb's age. In fact, they had both entered the bank's employ at the same time, and while Herb remained at his original position, Bridgewright had risen to better things.

One morning before opening, a group of secretaries and tellers gathered near the coffee machine and talked about the Christmas presents they were giving their boyfriends and husbands. When Herb appeared, Sue, who at the moment had no boyfriend and wanted to keep the fact a secret, said, "What are you giving your mother for Christmas, Herb?"

Herb squeezed his tea bag between two spoons. "I really shouldn't say."

"Aw, come on, Herb," Dot Levin said. After twenty years at the bank, she liked to play mother to the younger employees. "Your mother is such a wonderful woman." Sue wished she hadn't said anything.

"I know I shouldn't tell you this," Herb said, "but I'm giving her ten thousand dollars." The water in his cup had turned a light amber. "Merry Christmas to you all." He looked down at his cup as he balanced it in retreat.

"Did he say ten thousand?" Dot asked.

"Where would the little man get that kind of money?" said Jan Washington, a strikingly beautiful black woman.

At that moment Mr. Bridgewright stepped out of the elevator and marched toward the conversation. "Girls, girls, girls, this is no time to stand around and talk. Back to work!"

"This is my break time, Mr. Bridgewright," Sue said.

He gave her one of his sincere smiles, the type she always saw before he asked her for a date.

"And Herb Cubbey has lots of money," Paula Kimble said.

"No, he doesn't. Work!"

Sue slipped away with the rest of them.

In the parking lot after closing, Herb's money was again the topic of conversation. "Maybe the man lied," Jan suggested.

"No!" Sue insisted. She thought that Herb deserved his privacy as much as anyone. She hated it when the others started to pry into her life.

"Herbert has never told a lie since he was born," Paula said.

"He's afraid his mommy might slap his hand."

"Then he inherited it," Sue said.

John Franks from the trust department said, "I drove him home two years ago during the bus strike. He lives over in Bultman Village. You know those little bungalows built back in the Roaring Twenties. They looked better then, I imagine. He asked me in, and the old lady served me tea and biscuits. She looked like she was posing for a painting with her knitting. She kept telling me how hard it was to make ends meet and how her husband had been a wonderful man but didn't have a head for money. No, Herb didn't have any money then."

"A rich uncle," Sue said.

"A man like that with no idea in the world of how to spend money would be lucky enough to have an uncle leave him a bundle," Dot said.

"Worry not, ladies," John said. "I see Herb coming now. I'll just ask him."

As Herb walked by, he touched his hat. John said, "Sorry to hear about your relative dying like that, Mr. Cubbey. Your uncle, wasn't it?"

Herb glanced down. "You must be mistaken, Mr. Franks. My family has excellent health, except for my father, of course, and that was years ago. Good night all."

John watched him until he was out of sight and then he said, "He's a sly one. If he inherited the money, he's not telling."

"He seems to be a very private sort of person," Sue said.

"He has responsibilities," Jan said.

"He's not shy; he's just a Scrooge," Paula said.

"Goes home and counts it at night," Jan agreed. "Won't let anyone get any use out of it except his mother and what's she need with the cash?"

"Maybe he just saved that much and decided to give it to his

mother," Sue suggested.

The next morning John steered Sue into Mr. Bridgewright's office. "Ed, I just want you to know how poorly trained your employee is," he said grinning.

"What?" Mr. Bridgewright gave his supervisor's frown.

"I was trying to explain to Susie here that Herb Cubbey could no more save up enough money to give his mom ten thousand dollars than I could convince the trust department to play the ponies. Now I don't want you giving away any state secrets, but let us put down a round figure for Herb's salary." He switched on a calculator and pushed Sue in front. "Look about right, Ed? Now let's subtract food and clothing for two, house maintenance, and taxes. We can multiply the small remainder by fifty-two weeks in a year. He could save that much, but the canary would have to go hungry. Women just don't have a head for money. That's one of the things that's so charming about them."

She twisted out of John's grasp and hurried to the door. "Maybe he made it on Wall Street!"

There was a long silence. "Maybe he did," Mr. Bridgewright said.

"Several hundred thousand," John added with awe in his voice.

At the coffee machine that noon Paula touched Herb's arm. "Would you be willing to give a poor girl like me a little advice, Herb?"

"I beg your pardon?"

"Advice. You know—good ideas from your storehouse of wisdom."

"Certainly," he said doubtfully.

"What percent of a portfolio should a small investor have in stocks?"

Herb backed away as if she had been making demands on him in a foreign language. "I don't understand."

**B**y Christmas Eve most people had concluded that there had been a misunderstanding. Dot said that Herb was probably giving his mother "ten towels and a dollar."

"Weird present!" Jan said.

"But he can afford it," Dot said.

But Paula, who wouldn't let go, cornered him by the drinking fountain. "Is your mother's present all ready, Herb?" she said.

"All but the signature."

"Won't she be surprised by such a large sum of money?"

"Oh, I don't think so. She's used to it." And then Herb smiled.

Nobody had seen him really smile before, but they were sure it made him look roguish.

So as Christmas passed, Sue noticed that people's attitude toward Herb had begun to change. His fearful movements around the bank were clear signs of the secretiveness that had made him his money. His near baldness reminded them of the complete baldness of a TV star. His bow tie was like that of a famous lawyer who had been in the news. His tea drinking was a sign of international tastes.

"How are you doing today, Herb honey?" Paula said each morning.

Jan put forward the theory that Herb was a gambler. "He couldn't admit to it and still work in a bank, could he?"

Once Sue met Herb by the candy machine in the basement. "I'm sorry for how the others are treating you," she said. "I feel like I started all this."

"I don't mind really, Sue, although I don't understand a lot that they say to me. John asked me today what I thought of a copper kettle in the third. I don't know anything about kettles."

"I wish I could make it up to you in some way," she said. "Maybe dinner. How about New Year's?" Then she realized that she was doing exactly what she was apologizing for.

"I appreciate the offer, but I'll have to check with my mother. She usually has some friends over, and she might need me." He had a surprised, cornered look on his face.

Sue wasn't sure she wanted to go out with Herb—she was certain she wasn't going to mention the possibility to anyone—but he was kind and polite, characteristics that made him a good deal more attractive than John Franks or Mr. Bridgewright.

Instead of the gambler's image fading, it grew, along with that of the Wizard of Wall Street and the fortunate heir. Only Mr. Bridgewright scoffed at the entire question. Later Sue figured that he would have continued to pay no attention if it hadn't been for her.

"I just want to give you one last opportunity to go out with me on New Year's, Susie," he said after calling her into his office.

"No, thank you. I have a date already." And then before she could clamp her mouth shut, she said, "With Herb!"

The word got around the bank fast. Paula said that Herb might not be much to look at and that his mother might be a millstone, but money made up for a lot of faults.

"We never took you for the greedy type," Dot teased.



"I'm not going out with him for his money."

"With a man like him, what else is there?" Paula said.

"I kind of feel sorry for him."

"You'll feel sorry for him all right when he starts giving you diamonds."

For the next two days, Sue noticed Mr. Bridgewright standing at the door to his office watching Herb. When Herb left his window for the men's room, Bridgewright would make a mark in a notebook. Jan noticed, too. "The man goes to the john more than anyone I've ever seen."

John whispered the conclusion first: "Embezzlement!"

"What an awful thing to say," Sue said.

"First thing you know he'll figure out a way to steal thousands at once, and he'll be off to South America," Paula said.

John laughed. "I can just picture him in a hotel room in Rio wishing he could understand what they were saying on TV."

"Are you serious?" Sue demanded.

"Bridgewright is," John said.

"He can't be."

"I expect the examiners to swoop down at any moment."

The next afternoon, December 31st, Bridgewright stepped over to Herb's cash drawer at the end of the day. "We're going to have someone else check your drawer tonight, Mr. Cubbey," he said. A grim-faced young man in a gray suit stood at his elbow.

"Certainly," Herb said in a voice filled with surprise.

"And Mr. Hamilton wants to see you in his office immediately." Mr. Hamilton was the bank president.

"Yes, sir." Herb walked a few steps away and stood looking out the plate glass window at the bustle on Main Street. Sue could see his shoulders slump in defeat.

Mr. Bridgewright came over to her. "Well, Miss Rigney, we're going to be at the bottom of the Herbert Cubbey case soon enough. Mr. Hamilton has been informed. We've played games far too long."

"I don't think Herb even knows what game we're playing," Sue said.

She went to where Herb stood and squeezed his arm. "Whatever happens, Herb, I know you're innocent."

"Am I in some sort of trouble?" He seemed terribly afraid, and she wanted to mother him.

"They say you stole the money."

"What money?"

"The ten thousand dollars you gave your mother for Christmas." He swallowed hard. "You didn't really think I had all that money?"

"You said you did."

"If I did have that much, I'd take you out on New Year's to the best restaurant in town. You'd have flowers, and we'd drink champagne and dance all night."

"It doesn't take that much money to have a good time," Sue said. "I already lied and told Mr. Bridgewright we were going out."

"All right then," he said, straightening his shoulders. "We'll make some plans when we get back from talking to Mr. Hamilton. Will you come along with me?"

Sue followed him to the elevator.

"Could I have the opportunity to explain?" Herb said to President Hamilton.

"I expect you'd like one, Cubbey," Hamilton said. He was a short, heavy man with bushy eyebrows. "You should anyway! I'm an old man, so I don't need to be subtle. No time for it. So let's hear it. Bridgewright tells me you've been giving away thousands of dollars and the only explanation is you've got your hand in the till."

"I've honestly accounted for every cent that I've handled."

"Thought so. What about the gift?"

"I wrote my mother a check for ten thousand dollars at Christmas. I never should have told anyone."

"How's that again?"

"We haven't had much since my father passed away, so we pretend. Every year we write each other large checks. This year she gave me a check for two thousand. The year before I wrote one for five thousand, and she gave me one for eight thousand. Checks that is. We sit around and talk about what we'd like to buy until midnight, and then we burn the checks in the fireplace. We've always had a good time doing it. It must sound strange to outsiders."

Mr. Hamilton chuckled. "It's unusual, that's for sure, but not a bad idea. You get the pleasure of the money without the cost, which is not bad management at all. Not bad at all. Shows a good deal more sense than Mr. Bridgewright just exhibited."

"Do you have any further questions, sir?"

"Why hasn't an honest, imaginative young man like you received a promotion recently? Who's running this bank anyway? That's what I'd like to know."

FICTION

# Inspector Ueki's Day

by Ron  
Butler



Illustration by Lisa Knouse

**O**n the early summer morning that Noriko went to the hospital, the air was hot and humid, unstirred by relieving breezes from either the mountains or Japan's Inland Sea. But, with the windows open and the electric floor fan humming away, I managed to fall asleep after midnight, a rest that seemed to

last only minutes.

"Sam. Please wake up, Sam." Ordinarily, Noriko's voice is soft, lilting music, but this time there was a trace of urgency. "I am sorry to awaken you so early, but I think our baby is ready to be born."

I was on my feet immediately, pulling the string to the fluorescent ceiling fixture. The alarm clock on the tatami next to my pillow showed that dawn was at least two hours away. "What on earth do we do?"

Noriko raised herself carefully to a sitting position on the *futon*. "First, please ask Yumiko to bring my suitcase. Second, please call Karai-sensei at his home, and then, husband, let my parents know, as we promised."

When Noriko addresses me as husband, she's serious. I ran up the stairs and called out to Yumiko, then slid back the *shoji* to her room. Our housekeeper and nanny-to-be, who moved in with us after tragedy left her with no close relatives in her village, was already up, smoking a cigarette stuffed in the bowl of a long-stemmed pipe.

"It's Noriko, *obasan*." At the age of eighty, she was accustomed to being called Granny.

"Her time is here?"

"Yes. She wants her suitcase. I'm going to call Dr. Karai now."

Yumiko placed the cigarette in a sand-filled brazier for later use and I raced back downstairs to the telephone. Our family doctor, Akira Karai, instructed me to take Noriko to the hospital. While Yumiko helped her dress, I called Police Inspector Toshihiko Ueki, Noriko's father. Then, pleased with myself for taking the situation in stride, I picked up the car keys and went to the entranceway door.

Yumiko gave me one of the special looks from her vast repertory. "I know that the weather is hot, young man, but people will stare if you enter the hospital in your underwear."

Like many Japanese family physicians, Akira Karai not only made house calls when necessary, but maintained a genuine personal interest in his patients. Whenever I took Noriko to his office for her check-ups, Karai found time to sit down with us in his private waiting room, the one furnished with a homey decor where we enjoyed green tea, little cakes, rice crackers, and, best of all, a few minutes of English conversation. In return for the lessons, Dr. Karai waived his fees.

As we entered Okayama Hospital on this eventful morning, we found him waiting with Inspector and Mrs. Ueki. Dr. Karai escorted Noriko to the

registration desk, calling for the admission folder for Mrs. Sam Brent. As I handed over my hospitalization card, I was more pleased than ever that medical insurance is compulsory in Japan. Most of the maternity costs were guaranteed under the family policy paid for by our computer hardware company.

Noriko kissed me and told me not to worry, then hugged her father. "I will be fine, but please see that Sam is not neglected." Yumiko and Mrs. Ueki elected to remain at the hospital.

"This may require some time, Sam," the inspector said, "so I hope that you will take the day off from your work and spend it with me instead."

"So I won't be so anxious? It won't help."

"No," he said, as the closing elevator doors shut his daughter off from sight, "so we can share our mutual anxieties."

I knew I wouldn't be effective at the office, so I called Gotosan, our head clerk, and asked him to take over for me.

"Certainly, Bulentu-san, but please let me know as soon as you have news." It helps to have friends who care.

The two uniformed officers at the front desk looked up in surprise as we walked into police headquarters, and I realized that Inspector Ueki was un-

usually early this day.

"*O-hayo*," Ueki said. Good morning. He explained that I would be with him for the day. As soon as we entered his office, the telephone began jangling, and, with a look of resignation, the inspector picked it up. "*Moshi, moshi*." Hello. He listened for a minute, replied with a crisp affirmative, and said we were ready for our first case of the day.

"What's the problem?" I asked as we got into the police cruiser.

The inspector turned on the siren and lights, waited until traffic on the busy street by headquarters provided an opening, and sped away. "We have a man threatening to blow up his house."

I flinched as Ueki cut between two buses. "Where'd he get explosives and what's his reason?"

"The reason remains unknown for the time, but explosives are not involved. From what I was told, the man has turned on the gas outlets in his kitchen, and threatens to set it off if the officers on the scene try to intervene."

The information was ominous. Any uncontrolled fire in Japan poses a deadly threat. With so little available space, houses and business establishments are crowded together, and, even in the wealthier residential areas, only a few me-

ters separate one home from the next. "What will you do?"

"First," Inspector Ueki said, "I will attempt to establish communications. If that fails, we will have to evacuate the adjacent houses."

I sat back and watched Okayama coming to life for another busy day. Everywhere I looked there were crowds: masses of people bunched together at bus stops, bicycles and motorcycles threading their way through traffic, taxis schooling like sharks, clusters of commuters making their way into Okayama Station for their trains, old women carrying shopping bags as they prepared to make their daily purchases at green-grocers, butcher shops, and fruit stands.

And then the thought of Noriko blanked out everything else. I wanted to get to a telephone.

The section of new homes radiated affluence, with the white stucco-like exteriors brilliant under the summer sun. But I knew that underneath the red, green, and blue tiles of the roofs lay fragility as well as beauty. No matter how elegant the interior decor, regardless of the charm of translucent *shoji* panels and deep tiled baths, the thin walls provided little barrier to fire or blast, built instead to yield like supple withes

to the jolts of earthquakes, to tremble rather than shatter.

Inspector Ueki pulled up behind a line of fire trucks, ambulances, and other police cars. One of the officers, taking notes from an extremely attractive woman, hurried over to Ueki's cruiser. "We have already evacuated people from their homes," he said, pointing to a row of houses on a winding lane, each surrounded by a high stone wall with an iron gate in front.

"Where is the person who made the threat?" Ueki asked, stepping out of the cruiser.

"In there," the officer said, indicating a house with potted red begonias on either side of the entranceway.

Ueki walked toward the house. "How long has it been since anyone spoke to the man inside?"

"It has been almost twenty minutes, sir. We tried to send a man around to the back of the house to cut off the valve, but the man threatened to ignite the gas if we did not withdraw. Please note that all of the windows and doors are tightly closed."

"You think he might be unconscious, Toshihiko?" I was standing next to the inspector, aware of many curious eyes looking in my direction.

Ueki rubbed his unshaved chin. "That is a possibility, Sam." He deliberated for a few

seconds, then ordered the policeman to keep the neighborhood people as far back as possible. "I will try to take him by surprise."

Before I could comment, Inspector Ueki was darting toward the stone wall next to the house, crouching behind it in an apparent effort to reach a place where he could climb it without being seen from inside.

I saw the explosion before I heard it, a surprisingly dull orange glow that seemed to suffuse the air around the house for a long moment before the tortured air crashed about us, knocking people to the ground and hurling chunks of flaming debris and shards of glass in all directions. Some of the other houses around the crumbling mass were also catching fire, but my anxiety was focused on a single fact: a large portion of the wall around the remains of the blasted house was leveled, lying in broken, jagged fragments. Only one small section was relatively intact, and I scrambled toward it.

Inspector Ueki was sitting with his back to a block of stone, clothes and face covered with white powder. "Please help me up, Sam. We must see if anyone requires our aid. And, Sam, there is no need to move your mouth like that." He took my outstretched hand and pulled himself up. "I seem to be

intact. Hurry, now."

The casualty count was in: two firemen and one policeman with minor cuts—and the man and his wife who died in the fiery explosion.

Inspector Ueki was questioning the attractive woman I had seen when we arrived. "Please explain again, Fukuma-okusan, everything that happened."

It had seemed so trivial—at first. Mrs. Fukuma said that her neighbor, Issei Sagawa, was infatuated with her, to the point of obsession. "Often," she said, looking at the ground, "he would try to peer through the window when I bathed at night."

"What did you do?" the inspector asked.

"I told my husband."

She was crimson with embarrassment, and Ueki prompted her. "What did your husband do, Mrs. Fukuma?"

"He bought two dogs and kept them chained outside at night." "Yes, and then?" Ueki waited for her reply patiently.

"The dogs barked when Sagawa-san came to spy on me, and he said he would kill them." She looked back at the fire-blackened walls of her house. "This morning, before my husband left for work in Kurashiki, we found both dogs dead — poisoned."

"Ah," Ueki said, "and then I



imagine Sagawa and your husband exchanged angry words."

The woman intertwined her fingers nervously. "No, my husband did not want to be late for a business conference. After my husband went to the station, Sagawa-san started beating his wife and shouted filthy things about me that everyone around us could hear. Then he made a telephone call to me and said he was going to kill his wife and himself because I had treated him unjustly."

"At which point," Ueki finished for her, "you summoned the police." The inspector stuck his notebook in a back pocket. "All right, Sam, there is nothing more I can do here. My men will get a statement from the husband later. Shall we check the hospital?"

As we waited at a traffic light near Okayama Station, I remarked that the tragedy we had just witnessed seemed so senseless, something that needn't have happened.

The inspector glanced over at the high-spurting jets of water in front of the sprawling concrete terminal. "The police, Sam, are often accused of intruding into private matters. But," he said, merging into the inside lane after the light changed, "if we had been involved in the Sagawa affair from the beginning, all of this might have

been prevented."

At another time, I might have encouraged an expansion of this view, but as we pulled into the hospital parking lot, my concerns were elsewhere. The nurse in charge of the maternity section was sympathetic and polite, assuring us that Noriko was doing very well, but that, no, we could not be allowed to see her, and, no, she could not estimate how much longer it would be.

"Well," the inspector said to me, "*shikata ga nai*." That can't be helped. It's a frequent Japanese expression.

I was parched, dehydrated from the combination of heat, anxiety, and our recent experience.

"Can we get some iced tea, Toshihiko?"

"An excellent idea, Sam."

Moments after we got in Ueki's cruiser, the radio dispatcher called in with a message for him. The inspector acknowledged the call and puffed out his cheeks in a long sigh. "The tea will have to wait, Sam. It seems that I am needed to wrap up a kidnapping case. The boy who was abducted is safe, but I must complete the report."

I took off my tie and threw it into the back seat. "I can't get used to the notion that kidnapping occurs in Japan."

Ueki tailgated a bus for a few

moments, then passed with a blast of the siren. "This particular crime, I am sad to say, has a regrettably long history in Japan."

"How's that?"

"During the days of feudal warfare," he explained, "there were many *ronin*—masterless samurai—who roamed the country after the great conflicts. If they could not find some wealthy lord to take them into his employ, some of them resorted to crime, and abducting rich citizens for ransom was one of them."

"What about this case?"

Ueki stopped at a pedestrian crossing. "The child was reported missing yesterday afternoon. Some of his companions saw him walking away with a stranger, and, in the evening, the parents received a telephone call demanding twenty million yen for his safe return."

"That's a lot of yen. How did they manage to pay?"

"I do not think it was necessary," the inspector said, pulling into his reserved space at police headquarters, "but we will both hear the details at the same time."

The abducted boy, Hiroshi, was a ten-year-old typhoon, grinning, asking questions, pulling open desk drawers, and ignoring his parents' polite requests to sit still for a minute

or two. Inspector Ueki, like the rest of his countrymen, was markedly patient with young children and drew the story out in fragments.

After he managed to lose a kite in a tree, Hiroshi said, a man came up to him and asked if he would like to see a place where large crayfish could be caught easily in a nearby stream. The boy readily consented, but, after they crossed the rice paddy near his home, the man forced him to go into an apartment building. He was not hurt, but the man never let him out of his sight. Hiroshi answered all of the man's questions truthfully, including the fact that his father was a heart surgeon at Okayama National Hospital.

"Could you please tell us," Ueki smiled, "how you managed to escape?"

"That was easy, inspector-san," Hiroshi boasted. "This fellow started drinking after he called my father, and I stayed up very late heating sake for him. He was sleeping so hard by sunrise that I took off the curtain cords and tied him up."

"Ah, so," Ueki beamed. "*Un ga yokatta ne desu, ne.*" You're lucky. "And very brave, also, I must say. But, Hiroshi, can you tell me what lesson you have learned?"

"Oh, yes," the boy answered. "Never look for crayfish with

anyone unless I know him."

The inspector shook his head in amusement and handed a copy of the formal complaint to the boy's father, who stamped it with his signet. Hiroshi and his parents left, and the prisoner was brought in, still handcuffed. His hair was matted, and he looked like he needed a bath to go with a long-overdue shave.

The inspector glared at him.

"What do you have to say?"

"*Futsuka-yoi desu.*" I've got a hangover. His grin was mocking.

Ueki gripped the man's wrists and slapped him hard. The man opened his mouth to protest, but Ueki hit him again, harder, bloodying his nose. "You will—when asked—give your name, then reply to other questions only when addressed. Do you understand?"

He did. His name was Yoshio Kudo, he was twenty-seven years old, and his bar and gambling bills, plus the payments on a new car, were far beyond his monthly salary as a factory worker. The story sounded familiar—too much so.

When the inspector and I were alone in his office again, I mentioned something that disturbed me. "Weren't you a little rough on him, Toshihiko?"

The look I received was somewhere between pity and frustration. "We do not coddle

dangerous criminals in Japan, Sam. Kudo has a decent job at the porcelain factory, but he was willing to cause grief for a small boy and his parents because of an insatiable appetite for selfish pleasures. No, I do not think I was too severe."

The mention of children set me to worrying again, and I made a call to the hospital.

Nothing yet.

"Lunch?" Inspector Ueki said.

Noon was only minutes away, and my stomach reminded me that I hadn't eaten since last evening. "Something light would help."

Ueki told the desk sergeant where we were going. The heat, coupled with the smothering blanket of high humidity, was debilitating. The seasons in Honshu, Japan's main island, are dramatic—a brief spring, a rainy season that lasts six weeks, a summer that bakes the energy out of people, a short fall, and the cold months that last from December through March, all in a nation where central heating and air conditioning are rarities.

I was drenched when we arrived at the noodle shop near headquarters. Ueki pushed back the *noren*—the brightly colored banners that state the nature of a shop's specialty—and I followed him to one of the long bench tables near an electric

fan going full blast.

We ordered bottles of cold beer to go with the large bowls of noodles, and I sprinkled mine with *shichimi*, a blend of peppers, and started in with the chopsticks.

I glanced up and saw Inspector Ueki smiling at me. "What's so funny?"

The inspector stirred his noodles. "I remember how you ate *soba* and *udon* when I first met you."

That brought a smile to my own face. Like most newcomers to Japan, I used to eat the long, slippery noodles with "table manners." It was the inspector who taught me the sensible way to handle them: a firm clasp with the tips of the chopsticks, bending the head over the bowl, and slurping them up with gusto, careful to avoid splattering neckties or eyeglasses. The best part came after the noodles—picking up the bowl to drink the savory broth.

I was considering another cold beer when one of Ueki's men came in, walked up to our bench, and whispered something to the inspector. Ueki's face, I thought, registered anger. "We must leave now, Sam." He called out for the check and paid at the register.

The other officer's cruiser was parked in the alley in front of the shop, and Ueki and I got

into the back seat. "What's the problem now, Toshihiko?"

Ueki bummed a cigarette from the policeman as we drove off. "This, Sam, is one matter I am deeply ashamed to have you know about." I waited while he fired up. "For some time now, we have heard alarming reports about a fellow officer of mine, Inspector Shinichi Tanaka."

Ueki seemed reluctant to continue. "Has he done something wrong, Toshihiko?"

"*Hai, fushojiki desu.*" Yes, he is dishonest. The asphalt parking lot at headquarters seemed to shimmer in the heat. "This type of behavior does not happen often," Ueki said, "but even once is too much."

Three other men, all in civilian clothes, were in Ueki's office, smoking and drinking green tea while they waited. One of them stared at me, then looked toward Inspector Ueki as he sat down at his desk. "It is all right, Sumida-san," Ueki said. "He is my son-in-law and you may speak freely."

Sumida handed the inspector a plain brown folder. "This is what we have from our investigation of the Fast Pony Snack Bar, and we are certain that it is merely the tip of the iceberg."

Ueki read through the reports quickly, then slammed them down on his desk. "So, Tanaka was not satisfied with

taking a percentage of the gambling, but also decided to traffic in drugs and prostitution."

"Essentially," Sumida said, "that is correct. However, Inspector Ueki, it has required considerable time for our undercover men to gather even this much evidence. If we can wait, I think that more will be found."

"No!" Inspector Ueki got up and paced to the window overlooking the Prefecture Office Building. "To delay even one day more would do irreparable harm to our reputation. Is Tanaka on duty today?"

"Hai."

"Then say nothing. I want a squad of uniformed men in several cruisers to leave with me for the Fast Pony establishment." No one moved, and Ueki crossed his arms, glowering. "Ima!" Now! "We are going to make arrests and confront Tanaka."

The entertainment district was almost deserted. The only signs of activity were a few people sweeping sidewalks and truck drivers carrying cases of beer and sake through service entrances. We doubleparked in the lane where the Fast Pony Snack Bar was located, and Ueki led the way to the entrance. The front door was open, and we walked in, ignoring the startled woman behind the bar

and going up a flight of stairs at the rear.

Behind a curtain of wood beads, men were sitting cross-legged on square cushions, drinking and laughing as they played mah-jongg and *hana-garuta*, called flower cards because of their designs. The forty-eight card game is a bit more involved than poker, and a great deal of money can exchange hands in a single round. The true gambling sound of Japan to me, however, was the click of mah-jongg tiles as the players drew and discarded, building sets and suits.

Inspector Ueki drew the beads aside and walked in, holding up one hand for silence. "I am Police Inspector Toshihiko Ueki, and you are under arrest for questioning."

A woman dressed in a light green *yukata*, an informal kimono, tried to run past Ueki, but the inspector quickly restrained her. He directed his men to take the gamblers away, then faced the woman. "You are Mrs. Fujimura, and there are a number of things we are going to discuss."

She was in her late thirties or early forties, and the small muscles around her mouth and eyes were drawn tight in apprehension and anger. "Since when do the Okayama Police harass guests who amuse themselves harmlessly?"

She looked as if she were going to comment on the presence of an obvious outsider next, but the inspector didn't give her time. "We know all about Inspector Tanaka, and deceit on your part will only delay the inevitable." He called out to one of his men. "Did you find the drugs?"

The officer parted the bead curtain and came into the room. "Yes, inspector." He held out a box filled with clear plastic vials containing an assortment of pills and powders. "They were in the prostitutes' quarters."

Ueki took the box and held it under the woman's nose. "You see, Fujimura-*fujin*, that cooperation can only benefit you." Ueki's use of the title for "lady" incensed her.

"You are ready to blame me, but it was that filthy cop, Tanaka, who is responsible!"

The inspector smiled. "Finally, we arrive at the essential point. How did this begin?"

She sat down on one of the cushions, eyes lowered, and told us that Inspector Tanaka used to stop by the snack bar almost every evening after work, and that he had gradually learned about the constant gaming upstairs without appearing to be concerned. But with the passage of time, she said, Tanaka suggested a mutual business venture—adding drugs and prostitution to the list of en-

ticements. According to Mrs. Fujimura, Tanaka threatened to close her down when she hesitated.

"Do you know where he obtained the drugs?" Ueki's tone was milder.

"Yes. From Tokyo, and one of the men you took in is the one who supplies them once a week."

Ueki hunkered down in front of the woman. "So far, you have been most helpful, but there is one other important question. Do you know if Tanaka is involved in this type of activity elsewhere?"

She named a half dozen other establishments, all owned and operated by women.

Ueki looked up at me, speaking in English. "It is disgusting, is it not?"

We took Mrs. Fujimura to headquarters and Ueki turned her over to a team of officers for further interrogation. "There is no use in waiting, Sam," he said. "The time to stop Tanaka has arrived."

The long corridor took us past the communications room, a number of open offices, and the section for photographing and fingerprinting. Tanaka's office was next to the documents room, which was filled with clerks busily stamping and filing papers.

Inspector Tanaka was at his desk when we walked in, sorting a stack of reports. He stood

up, smiling, and bowed. His nose was bent slightly to one side, and, when he spoke, his voice was unexpectedly soft, almost a whisper. "Toshihiko! Good to see you, and this must be your famous American son-in-law."

"Stand up," Ueki snapped, "and place your hands on the top of your desk."

Tanaka's eyes turned to the doorway, and in one smooth, gliding movement, Ueki's revolver was in his hands. "Your dark secrets have come to light, Tanaka. Mrs. Fujimura has revealed everything, and before this day is over we will have a surplus of additional evidence."

Tanaka seemed to deflate. "Who else knows?"

"The superintendent is aware of the investigation, but so far the information has not gone beyond the people in headquarters. Give me your weapon, and be very careful when you remove it."

The other policeman stared in disbelief. "Surely, we can work something out, Toshihiko. I will resign." He smiled. "There, that is a good solution. What useful purpose would be served in prosecuting me? The publicity would be bad for everyone."

"Your weapon, Tanaka." Ueki's own revolver was pointed at Tanaka's chest. Slowly, and with deliberate care, Tanaka unsnapped the flap of his hol-

ster, removed the revolver with thumb and finger, and laid it on his desk.

Ueki picked it up and put away his own weapon. "Tanaka, there is one course of action that may be best for all of us."

I saw the quick flicker of hope in his eyes. "What is that, Toshihiko?"

Ueki snapped open the cylinder of Tanaka's revolver and removed all but one round. "I will leave you alone a few minutes to think about it." He put the revolver back on the desk and we left, closing the door.

Was it right or wrong, giving a man the dubious choice between self-destruction and the dishonor and public contempt that would accompany arrest and trial? On this day, it struck me as bizarre that I should be waiting anxiously for word of a new life at the same time that I was tensed for a sound that would mean death.

My thoughts were with Noriko at the hospital when an ashen-faced Tanaka opened his office door and slumped against the corridor wall.

"*Dekimasen*," he said. I can't do it.

Relieved, I watched as Inspector Ueki led him away.

The inspector was opening and slamming drawers frantically, even searching through



**KEEP YOUR FRIENDS IN**

# **SUSPENSE**

**ALL YEAR LONG!**

Give **ALFRED HITCHCOCK** this holiday season.

Everyone on your Christmas list who shares your enthusiasm for great mys-

tery reading will welcome a gift subscription to **ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE**.

Each gift recipient gets over 2,000 pages of outstanding detective fiction—in thirteen unique, distinctive Christmas "packages." The first **ALFRED HITCHCOCK** package goes under the tree—along with the gift announcement card we'll sign and send in your name. The others arrive regularly throughout 1983. And each is a reminder of your thoughtfulness, generosity and good taste. This kind of reminder is never too late.

**INEXPENSIVE...AND EASY TO GIVE, TOO!**

While once-a-year holiday gift rates are in effect, the first **ALFRED HITCHCOCK** subscription costs only \$12.97.

**alfred**

## **HITCHCOCK'S**

**mystery magazine**

Each additional gift is even less — just \$11.00.

And you can complete

your **ALFRED HITCHCOCK** gift-giving in a *matter of minutes*. Just fill out the adjacent gift order card and we'll take care of all the details. If you prefer, call us with your order toll free: **1-800/247-2160, Operator #300.** (In Iowa, call **1-800/362-2860.**) Then sit back and wait for the enthusiastic "thank-you's" that will soon be coming your way.

What *won't* soon be coming your way is our bill for your **ALFRED HITCHCOCK** gift order. We'll hold off mailing that until after the holidays.

Even the postage on the order card is prepaid. We want to make this Christmas economical and effortless for you... merry and memorable for everyone on your gift list.

Take a moment *right now* to send us your **ALFRED HITCHCOCK** gift list!

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

filing cabinets. I recognized the syndrome. "Out of cigarettes, Toshihiko?"

"So it seems." He pulled out his coin purse and emptied its contents on his desk: one five thousand yen bill, a single hundred yen coin, several ten yen coins, one bronze five yen coin with a hole in the center, and a milled fifty yen coin, also holed in the center. "Would you mind purchasing a pack from the vending machine, Sam? I want to finish these reports as soon as possible."

I scooped the coins into my hand and went to the row of machines in the hall. The glass window in one of them displayed packs of Cherry, Hilite, Peace, Seven Stars, and Echo. As a non-smoker, I don't know much about tobacco, so I selected Echo—the cheapest brand at eighty yen.

Ueki looked at the pack as if something nasty were spotting his desk. "Echo?" He touched the pack with one finger, then withdrew it hastily.

"What's the difference? They're all bad for you."

"The difference," he said, finally consenting to open the package, "is that these are cheap, have no taste, are harsh, and smell offensive."

"Then why does the Japanese Monopoly Corporation put them out?" Tobacco, like alcohol, is under government control in

Japan, providing a major source of tax income.

Inspector Ueki grinned. "They are made for people who have little money, do not smoke too much, and are unconcerned about the odor."

I was about to launch into one of my discourses on bad habits when Ueki's telephone rang. He wrote down a few notes, hung up, and pocketed the cigarettes. I followed as he strode down the corridor leading to the parking area.

The sky was a glaring haze of heated air. I felt myself wilting as we waited at a crossing for a local commuter train to pass, almost panting in the acrid cloud of exhaust fumes from cars and motorcycles. "Where are we headed this time?"

Ueki drove across the tracks while the barrier arm was still rising. "Tenmaya Department Store. We are having another rash of insane chokings on elevators."

"In Okayama?" I was accustomed to the senseless crimes of other cities in the world, or even Tokyo, where an occasional Crazy Tiger killer snaps under the hammering pressure of hectic city life, running through the streets with a knife, stabbing people whose only offense is being in the vicinity. Summertime seemed to bring out the worst in people. Only a

few weeks back, two factory workers in another major city hijacked a bus for no apparent reason, holding several passengers hostage at knifepoint. A lone detective had stepped into the bus with a pistol and ended it with two quick shots.

Now this. From what I'd seen on television, the reported cases of elevator chokings from Tokyo seemed harmless—men sneaking up behind women and choking them gently, then fleeing without causing injury. "It seems more like a prank than anything else, Toshihiko."

"Think of this, Sam," the inspector said as we came in sight of the huge store. "For the person who is grabbed around the throat by an unseen assailant, feeling the tightening of fingers, it can be no joke. And there is always the danger that one of the demented individuals will lose control and carry the 'prank' too far."

Ueki left the flashing cruiser lights on and parked in one of the sections reserved for taxis. As we entered the store through the revolving glass doors, the sudden contrast of cold air revitalized us instantly. We walked past the counters of fashions from Paris and New York on our way to the escalators, and I saw the inspector eye the silk cravats enviously as we began our slow ascent to the manager's office.

Although Kazutaka Arakawa's mannerisms were efficiently businesslike, he welcomed us courteously, asking his secretary to bring us cups of coffee. We exchanged a few pleasantries before Inspector Ueki requested details of the elevator assaults.

"Twice last week," Arakawa said, "women complained of the chokings. I ordered some of my staff to keep watch, but after the latest incident this afternoon, I decided to call the police. You can understand, Inspector Ueki, that I do not wish our customers to feel that they are in any kind of danger while shopping here."

Ueki replaced his cup on the saucer and stood up. "Naturally, Arakawa-san. Provided that you have no objections, I will make some personal observations myself and then post some of my men unobtrusively."

There were four elevators, but Ueki confirmed my own opinion that most of the shoppers preferred the escalators. "There must be many times during business hours that a woman may find herself the sole occupant of an elevator—until our culprit gets on."

We were on the third floor, with its vast stationery shop, rows of battery-operated games, and special sections for serious philatelists and numismatists.

While Ueki may have admired the silk ties, I envied the customers, who seldom had to wait for more than a few seconds before a polite, helpful clerk was standing by. I was considering the purchase of a new fountain pen when Ueki nudged me and inclined his head in the direction of one of the elevators. Just before the shiny metal doors closed, I saw a young man with long hair get on. The only other person inside was a woman.

The floor indicator lights showed the elevator was going to the top floor. "The stairs!" Ueki said, pushing open an exit door. We took the steps three at a time, but the elevator was already making its return descent when we reached it. This time I took the lead, but we were too late again. When the doors slid open, the only passenger was the woman, unconscious on the floor, the contents of her shopping bag littering the floor. Ueki identified himself to a clerk and asked her to call an ambulance, then inform the store manager.

"He must've gotten off before the first floor."

"Yes," Ueki said. "I think we should watch the escalators. He may attempt a casual exit."

We waited by the down escalator for several minutes before spotting the long-haired youth. He was wearing imitation jeans, a striped yellow and

white sport shirt, and leather sandals.

Ueki allowed him to take several steps, then grabbed him by the shirt. "I am Police Inspector Toshihiko Ueki, and I wish to talk to you." He released the man's shirt and stood back. "Were you on an elevator with a woman?"

The youth's eyes fixed on a spot behind us. "As you can see, I was on the escalator."

"But, before that, I believe you may have been on an elevator."

The suspect sneezed loudly. "*Wasurete shimaimashita.*" I've forgotten. "Who cares, anyway?"

The inspector yanked him by the hair with one hand and grabbed an ear with the other, twisting. "This, perhaps, will aid your memory—and improve your manners."

The suspect pulled away angrily and mouthed the most profound insult possible in a polite, literate society, one that is never spoken by adult males unless one has absolute certainty of superior strength or unquestionable status: "*Baka.*"

Fool.

The inspector's lips pressed into two thin lines, and I could see him trembling as he fought to retain control. He took several deep breaths, got a firm hold on the youth's belt, and dragged him to the side of the

store where the elevators were located. The manager was speaking to the woman, who had been unconscious the last time we saw her. She was sitting nervously on a green moquette bench, apparently recovered from the physical part of the attack.

Ueki shoved his captive in front of her. "Madam, I am with the police, and this, I am certain, is the man who choked you. Is there any way you can aid in identification?"

She looked at each of us before answering. "I did not pay attention when he entered the elevator, and all I remember after I bit his fingers was that I sensed the closeness of death."

Ueki was smiling as he forced the man's hands up to eye level. Two fingers on his left hand showed unmistakable fresh bite marks. "I am gratified, madam, that you possessed the courage to fight. Please give me your name and address so that we may call you as a witness."

We stood by until two officers handcuffed the assailant and pushed him out to their car. Then we used the manager's telephone and called the hospital.

Again, no word.

At five o'clock, with the day's heat still undiminished, Ueki put down the stack of papers he was stamping. "If I were a rich

man, I would purchase the entire world supply of paper and hide it somewhere. In another hour, fate permitting, we will check with the hospital again and then consider something to eat."

I was fidgety, and picked up the newspaper on the coffee table between the two sofas. It was thin, lacking the bulky advertisement sections found in American papers, but this was no surprise in view of the high cost of imported newsprint in Japan. What was surprising to me was the fact that so many people could read them with such ease. It took me hours to get through a single story, so I usually contented myself with the photo captions and the headlines.

Spoken Japanese isn't so bad—the verbs come at the end of sentences, as in German; context is the only way to decide if a word is singular or plural; and there are no definite articles. With a working knowledge of the mechanics of Greek and Latin, the grammar is comprehensible—but reading? In my book of impossibilities, this ranked highly. The Japanese use four alphabets: *kanji*, the characters borrowed from China; two separate alphabets of more than fifty symbols each; and Roman letters. Noriko, with her great empirical wisdom, started me out on comic books,

which I kept hidden in a closet in the fear that Inspector Ueki might see them.

"Daydreaming?" The inspector was leaning back in his swivel chair.

"I guess. What's keeping you so long?"

The inspector held up a pamphlet. "This is the latest advisory from the National Police Agency, alerting us to be prepared for the autumnal teacher beatings." He laughed at my expression. "I think you have received a special education about modern Japan today."

"Understatement, Toshihiko. What about the beatings?"

"Each fall, for the past few years, there has been a steady increase in the number of teachers attacked by pupils. Most of the assaults are premeditated and involve junior high school students using chains and steel pipes."

"Anyone killed?"

The inspector went to a window and leaned back against the sill. "One mother strangled her son after he almost killed a teacher who reprimanded him in class, and many people have required hospitalization."

"How many cases?"

"Last year, Sam, the National Police Agency reported eight hundred and forty of them."

From outside came the pierc-

ing wail of sirens as several cruisers pulled out on some mission of unknown urgency. "This sure doesn't sound like the travelogue descriptions of old Japan, Toshihiko."

The inspector stretched and smiled. "I promise to do my best to see that we keep Japan the way you like it, Sam." He looked at his watch. "Please call the hospital once more, and, if all is well, we will go in search of a decent meal."

I was starting to get up when we heard a scuffle in the corridor. Now what? I thought. Two uniformed men, both grinning, stood outside the open door, a tall shaven-headed man between them. "May we enter, inspector?" one of the officers said.

"Yes. What do we have here?"

"This," the younger of the officers replied, "appears to be the infamous book bandit, who labels himself Roisei Morimoto. We caught him as he ran out of Maruzen Bookstore carrying his latest loot."

Inspector Ueki seemed to be inordinately pleased for such a small catch as he walked around his desk to face the man. "So, at last we know your name, Morimoto-san."

The man seemed indifferent to his plight. "Do you mind if I sit down? It has been a tiring day." He pulled a pack of round playing cards from his shirt

pocket and began laying them out on the coffee table.

"And what," Inspector Ueki asked, "do the cards tell you, Morimoto-san?"

Morimoto's head glistened under the fluorescent lights as he bent forward, studying the rows of cards carefully. "This is all a tragic mistake, and either you will allow me to leave or I will walk away unhindered."

"Ah, so ka?" Is that right? "As much as I dislike to bother a man of your talents, Morimoto-san, I must ask what means of employment you have other than your presumed skills at fortune-telling and pilfering expensive books."

A hurt look crossed Morimoto's face. "That is unfair. If you have to know, I am a priest, and, if you insist, I will tell you also that I am a person who does only what the spirits dictate to me."

Ueki massaged the back of his neck. "Truly, this is an amazing statement. If I understand you correctly, the spirits advised you—by means of your cards—to steal almost five million yen worth of books from eight prefectures. And you do not deny that you are the person responsible for keeping so many policemen in Western Japan unnecessarily busy? You do match the description of the thief, beyond question."

Morimoto rearranged his

cards. "I look for wisdom, not price tags, and denial or admission is beneath my dignity."

The inspector laughed unpleasantly. "If you are indeed a priest, you are a strange one. What is the name of your superior?"

The name Morimoto mentioned meant nothing to me, but Inspector Ueki's eyes widened slightly. "The mystery deepens. I have had the honor of meeting this abbot, and I will now consult him about your statements."

Morimoto continued his search for the infinite in his cards and I returned to the pay phone.

I was standing at the window watching the red disk of the sun drop behind the mountains when the robed priest arrived in the parking lot on his motorcycle. He got off, adjusted his round black hat, hitched up his garments, and headed for the back entrance.

When the abbot came into the inspector's office, I was treated to the rare sight of Ueki bowing deeply from the waist to another man rather than giving his usual slight lowering of the head. "Sam Brent, it is my privilege to introduce you to one of Japan's most famous masters of Zen."

From early boyhood on, I've been a tad nervous in the pres-



ence of ministers of any faith (guilty conscience, according to my parents), and this was no exception. I bowed, debated if I should offer to shake hands, and found myself asking how I should address him. The priest collapsed on one of the sofas in a fit of rich, resonant laughter. "Choose any name you like, or none at all. I will remain who I am, and so will you."

When I looked at Ueki, he was smiling. "Well," I said, feeling better, "I'll stick with reverend abbot, knowing the latter and assuming the former."

That produced more laughter, and when the two uniformed men brought Morimoto back from fingerprinting, I felt that I'd known the priest for years instead of minutes.

The abbot stared at Morimoto, then looked back at the inspector. "You tell me that this worthless lout—this glaring blemish on a lotus blossom—was brazen enough to honor himself with the title of priest?"

"So he did," Ueki said.

The abbot pushed Ueki's overflowing ashtray to a corner of the coffee table. "Once, it is true, he wore the robes of our order, but he is no longer a priest."

Inspector Ueki asked why.

"Instead of meditating," the abbot said, "Morimoto would remain in his room with secular

books, and finally he quit coming to morning services altogether, claiming that it was hard for him to arise so early."

Ueki laughed. "So! What do you know of his interest in cards?"

The abbot looked at the book thief with contempt. "For a time, he remained in Okayama, going from one coffee house to another, wearing the priestly robes and claiming special dispensation to tell fortunes."

Morimoto interrupted angrily. "Yes, you holy bigot, and instead of permitting me to earn my rice with my special talents, you threatened to use me for an archery target if I did not leave town."

"That," the abbot said, crossing his legs, "was more of an insult to archery than a threat."

"You are merely jealous!" Morimoto shouted. "Only I can tell the future accurately."

The priest held out a hand. "The cards, please."

Morimoto complied, watching curiously as the abbot spread them out. "What do you see? Jealousy? The enormity of your dislike for me?"

"No, no," the abbot said, peering at the designs for several seconds. "I see you in prison, held in great ridicule by your fellow felons because you could not foretell the results of stealing books that you thought would give you a world of use-

less facts to dazzle people with."

"Take him away," Inspector Ueki ordered, "but allow him to keep his cards. A few years of practice without distractions may lead to improvement." He looked at the priest fondly. "You were kind enough to volunteer information. Would you please allow us the honor of taking you to dinner, or do you have pressing duties?"

The abbot's smile was light and warm.

Far below us, through the broad windows of the Kokusai Hotel's Rainbow Room, we could see the bright lights of the business and entertainment districts, and the crawling cone of yellow as a bullet train slowed in its final approach to the station. It was dark, but just before twilight the waiters often open the windows and throw leftovers to the hawks, who have learned to swoop down for tidbits from their airy vigil around the mountaintop hotel.

There were jugs of hot sake before us as we waited for our meal, and I wanted to know more about fortune-telling.

"I think," Inspector Ueki said as he filled our cups, "that the belief in such activities centers around the hope that the future can be altered if one is able to predict it."

"Does this cause any problems for the police?" I was keep-

ing an eye on the telephone, waiting for a man to complete his call so I could check on Noriko.

"Not really," Ueki said. "There is no law against hopes, no matter how foolish, but we keep very careful records of anyone who cannot show gainful employment. Sometimes we are required to keep watch on what I believe you call 'drifters,' but they are not so common these days."

The abbot noticed the direction of my looks. "You are worried about your wife."

"Yes."

"I am rather fond," the abbot said, "of people who worry about others rather than themselves."

The waiter brought our platters of thick salmon steaks, served with green beans, beets, and rice.

"You know, reverend abbot," I said between bites, "Noriko has told me something about *roan*, but I'm not smart enough to understand them."

"Really?" The abbot rested his chopsticks on the ceramic holder by his plate. "Let us determine that with one of the more famous Zen puzzles." His eyes seemed to sparkle with inner humor. "What is the sound of one hand clapping?"

I put down my own chopsticks. "The same sound, I suppose, that's heard by a man

with no ears."

Other diners were staring at the sight of a robed priest applauding in delight. "Marvelous, Sam Brent, simply wonderful."

"You don't think that's a stupid answer?"

"Oh, not at all!" he laughed. "I am pleased that Inspector Ueki has such a wise son-in-law."

"Okay," I said grinning, "so what's the real answer?"

"*Mu*," said the abbot.

Ueki laughed as I repeated the sound. "It means nothing, Sam—and everything. It is said that, if you contemplate the utterance *Mu* day and night, thinking of nothing else while sitting in the *zazen* meditation position for non-thought, your true inner self will unfold, showing your place relative to all else."

"Hey," I protested, "I'm just a simple businessman, and complicated philosophy gives me a headache."

"That," the abbot remarked, returning to his salmon, "is the most intelligent thing I have heard today."

I was never more certain of anything than the fact that I was going to try to know this priest better, but, for the moment, I was totally wrapped up in continued worry about Noriko.

"I hate to rush the meal, Toshihiko, but I'd feel better if I went on to the hospital."

"Yes," the inspector agreed. "You go now, and I will join you as soon as the good abbot is ready."

Dr. Karai apologized for having to rush off for an emergency appendectomy and turned me over to the nurse. She smiled and took me to Noriko's room. She was loveliness incarnate, jet hair spilling over her pillow, gentle eyes brimming with joy. I whispered my thoughts to her, accepted congratulations from Yumiko and Mrs. Ueki, and went back to the lobby to wait for the inspector.

He rushed toward me as soon as he came through the front door, and I didn't wait for him to ask.

"Have a cigar, Toshihiko. In fact, have *two* of them."

The inspector held the cigars like they were precious jewels. "Two?"

"Yep." I tried for a humble expression and failed. "*Futago desu*." It's twins.

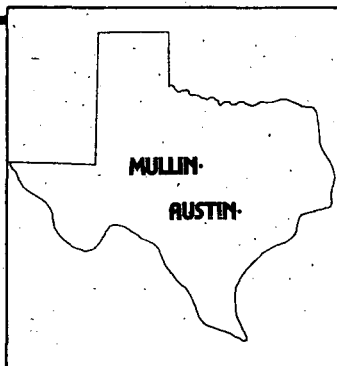
"And Noriko is doing very, very well."

"Ah," the inspector said softly, "I never thought I would be so happy to be a grandfather."

Together, we went to see the special woman who shared our love.

# CASES ON FILE

## The Mystery of the Copper Plates by J. Frank Dobie



NOTE: In his book *Coronado's Children*, Texas historian and folklorist J. Frank Dobie devoted a good many pages to the stories of the lost San Saba mine, believed to be a treasurehouse of silver (or maybe gold) in the vicinity of the San Saba River in Texas. His stories about it, recounted from the tales of oldtimers in Texas, from Indians, from the records (such as they are), make a fascinating cycle of legend mixed with enough fact to keep the myths alive. The following is one of them—and it only compounds the mystery even more, for in this case the lost silver isn't ore at all, but bullion in a hidden storage place. ED.

There were two Kirkpatrick brothers, Moses and James. They lived in the sober and sequestered village of Mullin [Texas], where Moses combined banking with his mercantile business and was the stout pillar, both moral and financial, that the Presbyterian church rested upon. He seldom glimpsed the wild flowers growing along the path of dalliance which his brother James so softly trod. James had been ed-

Excerpted from *Coronado's Children* by J. Frank Dobie by permission of The University of Texas Press. Copyright © 1930 by the Southwest Press, renewed 1958 by J. Frank Dobie. Copyright © 1978 by The University of Texas Press.

ucated to medicine in Kentucky, their native state, and riding with his "pill bags" over the far-stretched hills of the Colorado River satisfied his ambition. The people in the country called him "Doctor Jim." He knew a little about rocks and he often brought them home in his saddle pockets or tied to his saddle horn. Home was with his good Scotch parents. Sometimes he fancied a rock too big to carry on horseback; he did not mind spending a day going after it in a buggy. He had a fondness for art. He was a loiterer with the tastes of an adventurer. When he was close to fifty he married a woman twenty-five years his junior. He was a great hand at story-telling, and however idle the heroes of his narratives may have appeared to Brother Moses, they were life and life's romance to nephews and nieces. He never had any children of his own. Thus lived

"Twa Duries in Durrisdeer,  
Ane to tie and ane to ride."

In 1900 "a foreigner" came to Mullin. He was either a Frenchman or a Spaniard—it could not be, or was not, determined which. He was very non-communicative, but as he was in quest of information he had to make human contacts. It was

natural that he should "take" to Doctor Kirkpatrick, the easiest-going and the most tolerant man in the country.

He was looking, so he told the doctor, for a wrought-iron spike in an oak tree that should be somewhere north and a little east of the junction of the San Saba River with the Colorado. If he could find the spike, then he could find "the treasure of the banking mission"—the San Saba. The San Saba, according to the foreigner, handled the funds for all the Spanish missions to the northwest and was also a concentration point for bullion from mines in New Mexico and Colorado. It was a kind of clearing house for everything costly freighted between Santa Fé and New Orleans and naturally it had a storage vault for so much wealth. Rather unnaturally, however, this vault was far distant from the mission itself. In view of the danger of Indian attacks, a diagram to it was sent to "headquarters."

Where headquarters were, the foreigner did not say. Perhaps they were in New Orleans, perhaps in Mexico, perhaps in Spain. At any rate, after the San Saba massacre, headquarters alone knew where the wealth was stored; and for a century and a half headquarters took more pains to conceal

than to utilize the information. Then, somehow, the foreigner came into possession of it. He went so far as to let Doctor Kirkpatrick get a hurried glimpse at his chart—but not to copy it. After having spent several weeks in a vain search for the wrought-iron spike, he left. No one in Mullin ever heard of him again.

Doctor Jim soon spread the foreigner's story. Consequently, when one morning during the following winter a resident of the village found a wrought-iron spike in the ashes he was cleaning out of his fireplace, he naturally mentioned the matter to the doctor.

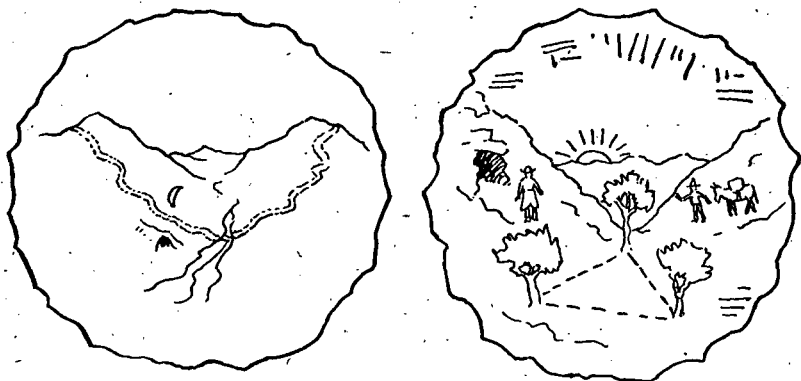
Doctor Jim at once traced down the man who had hauled in his neighbor's wood. Then he got the woodhauler to show him where he had cut up a dead live-oak tree. It is worth mentioning that a good deal of random digging had been going on in that very vicinity. Doctor Jim now entered into a loose oral understanding with the owner of the land and began operations. He interested Bob Urbach to the extent that Bob nearly broke his back and his credit digging and furnishing grub for a camp of hearty eaters. At last Doctor Jim had an occupation that was a passion.

A great deal of the exploration was through matted shinery and cedar that a man

could hardly penetrate without an axe. The first thing found was a flat limestone rock, perhaps four feet long, near the stump of the tree from which the spike had been taken. One side of it was covered with a picture, partly etched and partly painted, of an extraordinary pageant. The paint seemed to be red and yellow ochre, such as Indians commonly used. What the numbers and certain geometrical signs on this rock were has been forgotten; but many people are alive to testify to the train of ten pack burros that trailed across the stone as if to enter the mouth of a cave. On each of three packs and over the mouth of the cave was pictured a small yellow half-moon—the sign of treasure.

Doctor Kirkpatrick was as fond of deciphering codes as was Edgar Allan Poe of inventing them; he dawdled with mathematics. The figures on the stone fitted into memories of the foreigner's chart. Following Doctor Jim's directions, the laborers dug into what seemed to be the masonry of an ancient altar.

Here, between rocks that had protected them from becoming in the least tarnished, were found two "raw-beaten" copper plates, roughly circular in shape, each about twelve inches in diameter and about a quarter of an inch thick. The plates were



Doctor Jim's pictured copper plates.

covered with crude but clearly marked engravings. The first plate showed a trail winding down a hill, crossing a ravine, and then twisting up a hill to the east. Near the crossing, over what appeared to be a mining shaft, was the half-moon—a sign as magnetic to treasure seekers as the bright star was to the Magi. The second plate showed a setting sun near the mouth of a cave. A man standing by this cave looked across a valley towards another man who approached leading a pack burro. Between the two men three trees formed a triangle. The waiting man was dressed in a long coat of antiquated cut that reached below his knees—a coat too long to be a Prince Albert and too short to be a cassock. He wore on his head something between a derby and

a helmet. He had a French appearance. Some of the details were remarkably well finished. A series of bars along one side of the plate meant something to Doctor Kirkpatrick. Taken together, the two plates seemed to suggest the dual character of the San Saba wealth: mines and stored treasure.

Doctor Kirkpatrick now located a triangle of trees a half mile east of the place where the plates were found. At the root of one of these trees, hardly two feet down, Bob Urbach and his fellow laborers dug up a hand-hammered copper box, not more than ten or twelve inches long. The lid of it was etched with the same string of pack burros, headed for the mouth of a cave, that had been found painted on the flat rock. In addition appeared the name Padre Lopez



over the date 1762. Within the box were a crucifix set with pearls and two rosaries, one of ivory and the other exquisitely carved rosewood.

The intermittent hunting that resulted in the finding of these various objects extended over a period of two or three years. As they were unearthed, the public was allowed to look at them, but only Doctor Kirkpatrick understood the ciphers. He translated them into orders.

At last when he was ready to open the treasure vault, a work that would require a vast amount of excavation, he considered it wise to draw up a written agreement with the landowner. The landowner, who had in the beginning been contemptuous of the whole business, now demanded a lion's share of the treasure; he would not sign a contract for less. His Scotch stubbornness aroused and his sense of justice outraged, the doctor refused to agree to any such division. He would wait.

His health had been bad for a long time. He and his thrifty brother were not always in accordance, but at this juncture he went to Moses Kirkpatrick and detailed to him the whole story of the search.

"I now have all the information I need," he concluded. "I know where to find the treasure. But I am not going to dig

it out until this hog who owns the land becomes more reasonable. I'll wait if I have to wait until I die—and that may be at any time. You are my brother, and I want to tell you where the treasure is so that if anything happens to me the secret will not be lost."

"No," retorted the austere Presbyterian elder and banker, "you will not tell me. I have already listened to too much idle talk. You neglect your practice, you neglect your wife. I have no patience with all this Spanish treasure foolishness."

Shortly after this conversation the doctor became critically ill. For two days he suffered and then he died. This was in 1904.

Following the death of the doctor two things important to the sequel happened: the Moses Kirkpatrick home in Mullin burned down; at the annual fair in Dallas Moses Kirkpatrick for the first time in his life entered the booth of a palmist.

The palmist pored over the deep wrinkles in his hand. "Your house has recently burned down." She described the house. He believed in her clairvoyance.

"You are on the brink of great wealth," she continued.

"How am I going to get the wealth?" the Scotchman asked.

"That is not clear. Your riches are in the ground. You or some-

one near you has been very close to them already."

Years after this incident Moses Kirkpatrick used to lament in his scriptural manner, "My heart was turned away so that I would not hear. My ears were dull of hearing and my eyes they were closed." He had stood on the brink of wealth—and scorned the hand that beckoned him to knock and enter. That hand now, alas, was invisible beyond the chasm of death.

Not long after Doctor Jim's death, his brother surrendered the copper plates, the stone, and the copper box with its contents to the doctor's young widow. She sold the crucifix, the exquisite rosaries, and the curious box to a dealer in Dallas. She gave the stone to some

stranger. The copper plates she took with her to California, where she married again and died.

By expending time and money a good detective might trace down those extraordinary objects, but they seem to be lost forever. Even if they were recovered, however, it is very doubtful if any person could be found with Doctor Jim's skill and knowledge to decipher them. The doctor had made copies of the stone and plates on some wooden lids of old-fashioned candy buckets, but when the Kirkpatrick home burned they burned also.

The natives are still digging sporadically and blindly out in the hills where Doctor Jim dug up some very interesting copper objects—quite untarnished.

**Important Notice to Subscribers:** All subscription orders and mail regarding subscriptions should be sent to P.O. Box 1932, Marion, O. 43305. For change of address, please advise 6 to 8 weeks before moving. Send us your current mailing label with new address.

# BOOKED & PRINTED

by Mary Cannon



**PATRICIA MOYES**

**I**n the past ten years or so, Patricia Moyes has written more than a dozen mysteries featuring Scotland Yard's Chief Inspector Henry Tibbett and his affable wife Emmy. Holt, Rinehart & Winston publishes Moyes in hardcover, and some of the novels have been reprinted in Penguin paperback editions. And yet it was the recent reissue of three of Moyes's novels—*Angel Death*, *Falling Star*, and *Who Is Simon Warwick?*—that drew my attention to this writer for the first time, then drove me to my library's "stacks" for more.

Those new paperbacks are a perfect place to begin if you, too,

think you might appreciate the estimable Tibbett and his good wife. They are vintage Moyes, showing off the "mild, sandy-haired little chap in his 40's" to good vantage, and displaying, too, the talents of his Emmy, a "splendid, plump, black-haired woman with a great sense of humor." Singly, the Tibbetts are ingratiating enough. But together they form a truly winning team.

*Falling Star* (Owl; \$3.50, 255 pp.) is my favorite. For one thing, it is narrated by a delightfully unexpected character named Anthony Croombe-Peters, nicknamed "Pudge." Pudge is the wealthy son of Lord

Northburn; he's a fussy young man who's been sweet-talked into financing a fledgling movie company's low-budget project, one they hope will be a "classic." The road has been rocky all along, but that's nothing to the shock waves created by the tragic death of the movie's aging star—while the cameras are rolling, no less. Pudge is appalled, and tries to drag in a slight acquaintance from Scotland Yard to investigate, but Henry Tibbett adamantly insists that accidental deaths are not his domain. When the film company is further dogged by the apparent suicide of a script girl, Henry does step in, although at this point Pudge would really prefer that he stay out of the mess. Pudge chats along as he recounts the tale; of course, he rarely discerns what is actually going on in the quiet Henry's head (although Pudge never suspects he is missing anything). So the reader must sift through Pudge's chatter to get a clear picture of Henry Tibbett at work. But Pudge's very special world view also adds a lot to the novel. Consider the following passage recording Pudge's impression of an aggressive young woman summoned for an interview:

"Her shoes fascinated me. They were made in shiny patent leather, the color of a

mole's fur, with squat heels and little black bows. They made her feet look like two tiny animals creeping across the carpet. This was not a pleasant conceit, but once the thought had crossed my mind, I could not get rid of it. I shrank instinctively from those small, neat feet, as one does from a mouse—not because the animal is dangerous, but because of the speed and unpredictability of it."

Now I ask you, who could refuse to be charmed by Pudge and his odd way of looking at life?

The other two Owl reprints are more conventional, but no less wonderful. *Angel Death* (\$3.50, 226 pp.) is set in the fictional British Seaward Islands in the Caribbean, the site of several Moyes novels. This one is a real thriller, opening with the strange disappearance of a salty retired schoolmistress who had been staying at the Anchorage Inn, owned by friends of the Tibbetts. When Henry and Emmy arrive for their long-awaited Caribbean vacation, they find themselves in the thick of a very un-jolly conspiracy. The dream trip becomes nightmarish for Emmy when Henry appears to suffer a nervous breakdown. A freakish and devastating hurricane follows, and Henry turns up shipwrecked and delirious—and

wanted by the local police. Emmy comes to the fore in this novel, proving herself to be quickwitted, courageous, and staunchly loyal. But there's still much left to puzzle over before a drug ring, murder plots, and local political tensions begin to shape into a deadly pattern. The Anchorage Inn and some of the local characters turn up again in *The Coconut Killings*, as do the Tibbetts' friends from Georgetown, who also appear in *The Black Widow*.

*Who Is Simon Warwick?* (\$3.50, 167 pp.) is a neat and twisty puzzle of the mistaken-identity variety. It all begins when a crusty old millionaire alters his will, leaving his entire fortune to a long-absent nephew. When the old man dies, his London lawyer runs ads to find the nephew, and winds up finally with two young men, each of whom, for different but equally convincing reasons, could be the real Simon Warwick. The lawyer's dilemma seems to be solved when one of the two claimants is murdered, and the other is arrested for the crime. Tibbett's celebrated "nose," however, tells him that the man in jail is indeed lying, but not about his innocence, and Henry and Emmy go all the way to Virginia to investigate his background. It is Emmy's soft heart

that saves the day—and the real Simon Warwick. The solution is so unexpected that I defy any of you to guess it.

The characters in all the Moyes novels are drawn with warmth and wit, with detail and credibility. *Falling Star* offers Pudge, of course, but some of his companions in the movie-making business are almost as offbeat. The Seaward Islands novels are benevolently supervised by Miss Lucy Pontefract-Deacon (pronounced "Pomfrey-Doon," but you knew that already, I'll bet). Lucy is a grand old lady and Henry's intellectual match. Some of the characters in *The Curious Affair of the Third Dog* are fun—that one is a mystery set in a Hampshire village and centered around the world of greyhound racing—while bigots on both sides of the Atlantic are ruthlessly impaled on Moyes's barbed wit in *The Black Widow*, when the beautiful but promiscuous wife of the Tampican ambassador is drugged and shot in a murder made to appear a suicide. The plots involve politics, passion, and pecuniary gain, and there are always enough red herrings to keep one guessing up to the final moments. Those of you who like British mysteries are going to love the adventures of Henry and Emmy Tibbett.

## MYSTERY REVIEWS

Virginia Rich is a new face on the mystery scene, and a very welcome one. Her first novel is **The Cooking School Murders**, set in the small town of Harrington, Iowa. The action opens with the first class of an adult education course in gourmet cooking, conducted by a visiting celebrity author and cook. Mrs. Genia Potter, a sixty-year-old widow, engineered the class, so she feels some responsibility when one of her students has her throat expertly cut almost immediately after the class demonstration on knives and their handling. This is a chocolate mousse of a mystery, a delectable concoction of interesting characters and local color, all generously laced with wit. Genia is a likable sleuth, a smart, handsome woman with a comfortable income and a great curiosity for life. Ms. Rich ruthlessly exposes the social mores of small-town middle America, and many long-buried skeletons in the town fathers' pasts are unearthed before the novel's close. And as a special-bonus, all of the mouth-watering recipes mentioned in the book are printed on the endpapers. Delicious! The publisher promises us that this is the first in a series. I don't know how many murders the quiet town of Harrington can survive, but it sounds as if Genia's next brush with death may be in her summer home in Maine. (E. P. Dutton, \$11.95, 207 pp.)

I loved Martha Grimes's first novel, *The Man with a Load of Mischief*. Now we have the second of her contemporary British mysteries, and this one is also named for the local pub: **The Old Fox Deceiv'd** (Little, Brown, \$13.95, 299 pp.). Back again is the sympathetic and attractive Inspector Jury, teamed up with his alter-ego, Melrose Plant. Jury is the straight man and Plant is the zany, a titled bachelor saddled with a harriidan for an aunt, and fired with a zest for true crime. The tale opens when a lovely young woman, all dressed up for a Midsummer Night party, is stabbed on the dark steps of one of the steep alleys that wind through the seaside village of Rackmoor. Was she really the long-lost ward of the rich squire? Or was she an impostor, primed by someone in the inner circle with an eye to fraud? More important, why was she killed? There is yet another murder, plus an attempted murder foiled by a stalwart dog, before Jury and his shadow close in on the killer. The plot is a puzzler, but I revere Grimes for her writing. Who can resist a smile when she describes a nosy spinster as having "pale eyes darting here and there like little silverfish"?

Gladys Mitchell has written over sixty mysteries. In her latest, **Uncoffin'd Clay** (St. Martin's Press, \$9.95, 189 pp.), the narrator is likable Michael Lockerbie, a widower and author who goes to his brother's house in northwest Dorset for a quiet visit. But it's not quiet for long, for soon a young son of a local sheikh is seriously injured in an antique "man-trap." This triggers a visit from the aged Dame Beatrice, an official psychiatrist called in to question four young hooligans suspected of the mischief. She and Michael team up, and together they unearth a body and break up a burglary ring before they solve the original crime. This one is ver-r-ry British, longer on characterization than action—just the cup of tea for those of you who like psychological puzzlers.

Forty-year-old Jake Ryan is a loving husband and father. He's also a good cop, which is why he heads the Homicide Task Force in Manhattan. But when he stops on the way to a family wedding to question a suspicious character, he can only watch helplessly as his wife is gunned down on the pavement, hit by the fatal bullet meant for himself. He goes into a tailspin, and when he's forced into a leave of absence, he continues the investigation on his own with an eye for personal vengeance. The trail leads him to Montauk, Long Island, where he's sheltered by a retired cop. It also involves him with a spunky Scotty Stanton, young woman grieving over the loss of a loved one who has also gone to Montauk to escape. Such is Sandy Johnson's setup in **Walk a Winter Beach**, an exceptionally taut suspense story with very credible characters and a convincing love story. (Delacorte Press, \$13.95, 372 pp.)

Emma Lathen has lots of fans already, so I probably needn't describe her series character in detail. But for those of you who haven't tried Lathen, John Putnam Thatcher is a low-key, middle-aged senior vice president of a giant bank. This time Thatcher is representing Sloan Guaranty Trust at the winter Olympic games at Lake Placid. He's on the spot when a skier is felled by a sniper's bullet on a jump. More to the point, he's there when the local Sloan's branch discovers that it has taken in a half million dollars' worth of bad travelers' checks. There's fame and a promise of fortune in the wintry air for the Olympic contestants, and there are lots of behind-the-scenes action and various sub-plots exposed before the final, heart-stopping scene when the sniper again takes a bead on a young woman skier during her run. **Going for the Gold** is more fun than watching the Olympic events on TV. (Pocket Books, \$2.75, 255 pp.)



# THE MYSTERIOUS PHOTOGRAPH



Copyright © 1967 by Andre Kertesz

*Just a little closer. . . .* We will give a prize of \$25 to the person who invents the best mystery story (in 250 words or less), based on the above photograph. The story will be printed in a future issue. Reply to Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine, 380 Lexington Avenue, N.Y., N.Y. 10017.

# THE STORY THAT WON



*Cartier-Bresson/Magnum*

In the August issue, the Mysterious Photograph was the one shown here, a picture by Henri Cartier-Bresson of a man fallen off a crowded wall. It was our first Mysterious Photograph contest, and the entries came in thick and fast, all of them showing a high degree of imagination, many of them entertaining. We want to thank *all* the entrants and to say that, even if you didn't win this time, we certainly hope you'll keep trying. We, at least, have had as much fun with it as the contestants seem to have done.

And now for the winner. Or, rather, the winners. Because we found ourselves with two, and although one of the entries—a poem—wasn't written in the format we had in mind, we couldn't pass it by. And so we are very pleased to announce that first place, and a \$25 prize each, were claimed by

James A. Noble, of Patuxent River, Maryland  
and

Katherine H. Brooks, of Wayland, Massachusetts

But it was a hard choice. Honorable mentions, therefore, also go

to the following:

Jesse Osburn,  
of Tulsa, Oklahoma, for "Finders, Keepers"

Andrea J. Gassler,  
of St. Johns, Pennsylvania, for "Who Knows?"

Catherine Metting,  
of Lake Zurich, Illinois, for "The Day We Died"

In next month's issue the September winner will be announced.

## PARADE

by James A. Noble

The police sergeant greeted Detective Buckler at the base of the plaza wall and went immediately into the details of the incident.

"I've been able to fix the time of death at around one thirty-two P.M., since several of the witnesses sitting close to the victim saw him alive just before the South Hampton College Marching Band passed by. The parade organizers say South Hampton was to pass this plaza at exactly that time. The lab boys figure the victim had been struck on the top of the head with a light to moderate blow which knocked or startled him from his perch on the wall. He died when he hit the side of his head on the pavement. No one actually saw it happen; too much noise and excitement what with the band playing and people yelling. We're holding a boy who was standing behind the deceased and a tall lanky guy sitting next to him when it happened. Figure the kid. Only one in a position to hit the guy on top of the head."

"Better let them both go, sergeant," said Detective Buckler, kicking gently at the flood of newspapers and trash lying on the street. "Get down to the end of the parade route and hold the no doubt frightened young lady from South Hampton College who's missing one of these."

He stooped down and gingerly picked up a slightly bent major-ette's baton.

"I'm sure she will want it to practice her high tosses with."

## WHAT'S NEW?

by Katherine H. Brooks

Who killed the fellow lying  
there

So limply, on the news?

The folks who watched his  
downfall

Are not supplying clues.

They balk at questioning, and  
sit,

With noses in the air,  
As if they hadn't witnessed it—  
As if they didn't care.

He's beaten, battered,  
bludgeoned,  
His bones severely broken,  
And all these people played a  
part,  
But not a soul has spoken.

The time is only ten of nine—  
The day has just begun,  
The angry crowd has  
gathered,  
The dirty deed is done.

They mutter, and they mumble,  
United, as a force,  
They did this little rumble,  
Yet suffer no remorse.

It's funny how a body  
Of people, free from sin,  
Can turn to something shoddy  
When patience spreads too thin.

Perhaps the time for truth is  
here.

To be completely blunt,

I did it, too. I'm not ashamed.  
(I'm sitting there in front.)

We coldly plotted his attack—  
We checked the route, and  
planned  
To stop the villain in his  
tracks—  
By way of reprimand.

This morning, as the victim  
Was strolling through the  
mist,  
We chased him, and we  
kicked him,  
And we beat him with our  
fists.

We killed him—yes—our  
paper boy—  
The good-for-nothing traitor.  
For weeks on end he failed to  
show  
Till after nine, or later.

It's hard to drink your java  
Without the news. How  
grating!  
A person really ought to have  
Some reading matter waiting.

We caught him on his way to  
work,  
And taught him such a lesson!  
Then COOLED him good—the  
little jerk,  
And here's our mass  
confession!

LAST CHANCE TO OWN  
**THIS  
UNIQUE  
COLLECTOR'S  
ITEM!**

150 COPY  
'LIMITED EDITION' PRINT OF  
EQMM'S FIRST COVER.  
DATED FALL, 1941,  
SIGNED AND NUMBERED  
BY ELLERY QUEEN HIMSELF.

20" x 30" serigraph,  
signed and numbered with  
certificate of authenticity

\$75



-----EQMM COLLECTOR'S PRINT ORDER FORM-----

Send to: **EQMM FIRST COVER**  
**Davis Publications Inc.**  
**380 Lexington Avenue**  
**New York, NY 10017**

Make checks payable to Ellery Queen's  
Mystery Magazine. Do not send cash.

I wish to purchase THE EQMM FIRST COVER PRINT PERSONALLY SIGNED AND  
NUMBERED BY ELLERY QUEEN. I have indicated below the name of the registered  
owner to be handwritten on the CERTIFICATE OF AUTHENTICITY, either my own  
name or that of the person for whom it is a gift.

I enclose \$75 for each print; plus \$1 each for postage and handling. (N.Y. state residents  
add 8¾% tax.)

NAME

(please print)

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

Name of Owner to be handwritten on Certificate of Authenticity.

(Please attach sheet for additional gift orders)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FICTION

# The Descendants by of Frost Louis Weinstein



*Illustration by Mark Fresh*

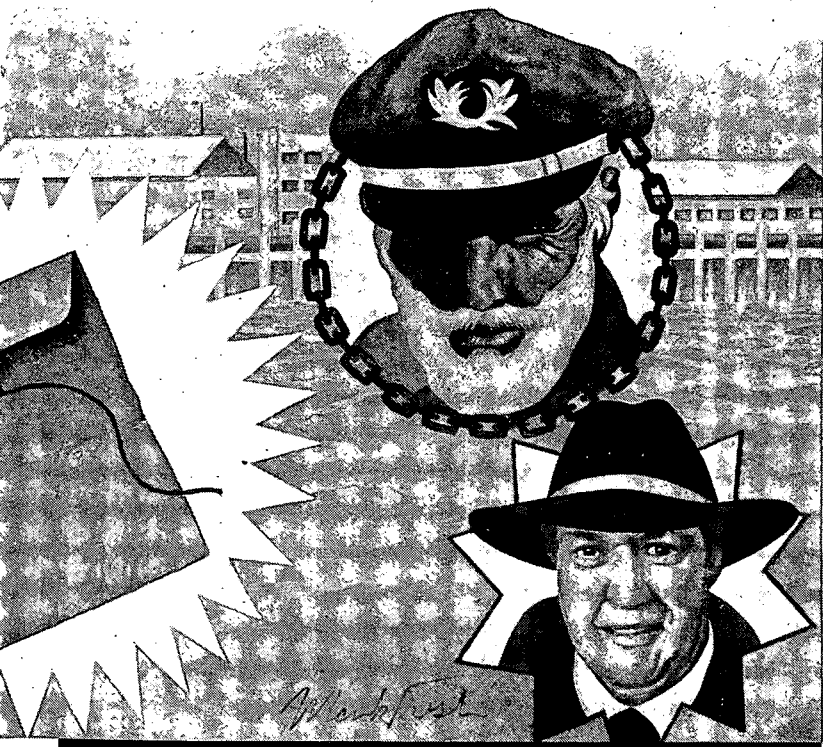
90

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG  
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



**A**fter leaving Dwight Farallon, I wasted no time calling Pat O'Hara to enlist his help in recovering the stolen Farallon securities—all negotiable, as good as cash, a quarter million dollars' worth. I wanted more out of the deal than exercise and experience, which is what Pat calls the skimpy per diem and expenses Dwight offered me, together with the temptation of a fatter payoff if I came through.

Around ten thirty A.M. Pat settled down with his coffee at the kitchen table in my Manhattan apartment. My conscience was starting to bother me and I spoke my piece. It wasn't fair for me, Phil Mandel, to hog the bows and hefty fees when Pat's brainwork produced the results. On this case, it had to be a fifty-fifty split. Pat agreed. First, he's not an argumentative type. Second, the case had a definite waterfront connection, and the waterfront is Pat's meat. Third, though he never complains about being lonely or





bored, I know he welcomes a little puzzle, something he can sink his mind into, to break the routine. Pat is somewhere around seventy-five, a retired New York City dockmaster. He has two grown sons, one a lawyer and one a police sergeant, and four grandchildren, but lives alone on a houseboat at Lacey's Marina in Brooklyn.

I ran down what I knew about the Farallon theft. Fairly early on a Monday morning an old messenger—a retired postman—was grabbed coming out of the small, three story Farallon building on Baker Slip, one of the narrow little streets running off South Street. The two holdup men dragged him back into the doorway and quieted him with a blackjack to the skull. Almost two weeks later, the messenger was still in the hospital. The two guys ran off with a manila portfolio containing the securities. I used my hands to approximate the size.

Someone coming out of the self-service elevator in the building lobby witnessed the tail end of the fracas. Others in the street got a hurried look at the two men racing toward South Street. No one could say for sure which man had the portfolio. A passing patrolman was alerted and gave chase. Within minutes others from the stationhouse two blocks away joined in. One thief—tall, dark and beefy—hotfooted it north up the marginal street past the Fulton Fish Market. Not till almost an hour later did the police corner him in an empty pier farther up the river and shoot him dead when he resisted arrest. He turned out to have a record a mile long, which helped explain why he chose to fight it out rather than surrender and rot in jail for the rest of his life. He didn't have the securities with him, nor did a search of his path turn them up.

The other thief—described as being fairly tall, blond, mustached, and in his early twenties—headed south past the piers and somehow disappeared into the scenery. One witness thought—he wasn't sure—he had been carrying a portfolio. The police didn't think there was much chance of finding him real soon around New York.

"That's all," I said. "Not much to go on."

Pat put down his coffee cup.

"It's a nice day for a walk, Phil, a little stroll along the East River. Looking over the ground might tell us something."

We took a walk, a good walk. But as Pat said, he was used to walking and I needed the exercise. Pat is tall and lean, ramrod straight, spry as most men half his age. He is also sharp as a quiz kid and what he can't tell you about the New York waterfront, past and present, is too trivial to mention. He keeps up, walking

his old districts and making trips on his boat, the *Barbara Ann*, named after his granddaughter. He knows what's happening on the 578 mile stretch of New York City waterfront.

Along the way, Pat began a yarn out of his memory book. I knew from experience he wasn't talking just to pass time. The tale would have some bearing on the Farallon case.

**“Y**ou wouldn't remember the Eagle Street robbery, Phil, about twenty-five years ago, the day after Christmas. Three guys held up an armored car making a delivery of a large amount of negotiable securities. The operation went sour. One guard decided to be a hero and wouldn't drop his gun. Before you could say 'spit,' the whole neighborhood was crawling with cops. One holdup guy was killed on South Street, a few blocks from Eagle. The other two guys split up and kept going. One headed north, the other south. Sound familiar?”

“So far,” I said.

“Well, the similarity doesn't end there. The guy carrying the briefcase with the loot managed to shake off his pursuers. The piers in that section were pretty active then, not dead like today. There were plenty of ways for him to lose himself. Containers and bulky cargo, such as crated machinery and knocked-down autos, were piled under the elevated highway. Empty packing cases and stacks of pallets were scattered everywhere. At parking concessions under the highway, cars were jammed close together. Barges were tied up at the bulkheads and alongside the piers. He could have ducked inside one of the covered barges, or hunkered down between crates or drums on a deck scow. He could have climbed up into the framework at a coal yard hopper. The police chased up and down and all they got was tired. But they figured he hadn't gotten away, so they blocked off and began to comb the area.

“An hour or so later the break came. At one of the vacant piers the police noticed how agitated an old watchman was when they questioned him. The poor old guy was scared witless. He'd been told to stay up near the pier entrance and to tell the police he hadn't seen anyone come onto the pier or go running past, and that if he said the wrong thing the first bullet would be for him. The police hustled him off the pier and chased him home. Then they went after the fugitive, working their way carefully along the pier. A pigeon fluttering overhead gave the fugitive away. The cops looked up at the noise and spotted him perched in the rafters a

couple of hundred feet down the pier—Lord knows how he got up there, he must have been a human fly. He refused to come down quietly, opening fire and winging one officer in the shoulder. The others shot him down. As the newspapers wrote, he tumbled down like a wild turkey out of a tall tree.

"It turned out that the dead man, a one-time circus acrobat, was wanted in Illinois, Ohio, and Indiana for bank robbery and an incidental murder or two. He didn't have the briefcase holding the securities with him. It showed up, empty, three or four hundred yards farther down the river, behind a pile of trash along the bulkhead just below a pier. After a few days of fruitless investigation on and around the piers, the police and other interested parties scratched the waterfront and concentrated their hunt for the missing securities elsewhere. It had begun to look like a passer-by had happened on them."

Pat stopped talking. We strolled in the mild May sunshine. Pat

---

***"Excitement?" Crespin smiled.  
"We had it early last week, cops  
and robbers right out of 'Kojak.'"***

---

was moving slowly, for him, because he was taking a good look at all the piers and other installations along the way. He halted about halfway along the bulkhead between two decrepit unshedded piers.

"Now, let's get back to the present," Pat said.

A covered barge stretched broadside to the bulkhead. Curtains showed at windows a few feet under the barge's flat roof. Atop the roof was a brace-supported black and red sign painted with the words CRESPIN'S LAUNCH SERVICE. A breasting-off float spanned the distance between the big rectangular granite blocks of the bulkhead wall and the weathered timbers of the hundred foot barge, evidently a railroad barge fixed over into a two story houseboat. A wooden gangway, rope-string rails along both sides, made a bridge between street and barge deck. Strung out from both ends of the barge were long, narrow wooden floats, held in place by slender timber piles. Other floats, similarly secured, branched off

at right angles from the two innermost floats. More than a dozen—I didn't count—small boats of various sizes, most of them launches, were tied up to the floats. There were also three or four boom-equipped work boats, and strung along the open pier to the left were a deck scow and two or three railroad-red covered barges, the paint dull and faded.

To the right of the office barge came the sound of hammering from below deck on a boat tied up there. Two husky young men, one dark and very tall, the other shorter and lighthaired, were fussing over an engine laid out on the float.

"Company coming," Pat yelled as he started down the gangway.

A small, yapping, part-terrier mongrel appeared at the foot of the gangway. The worst kind of dog, indecisive, its tail wagging as fast as its jaws. A thick-bodied man of indeterminate age, keen brown eyes looking out of a lined, weather-beaten face, came into sight from around the left side of the barge house. He was wearing heavy dark work pants, army shoes, and a checked wool shirt. Gray-flecked brown hair poked out from under his peaked cap. His face broke into a smile.

"Pat O'Hara, the old Hibernian. Good to see you're still alive. Who's your friend?" The voice was the gruff, booming voice of a boatman used to shouting across water against wind and racing engines.

"Phil Mandel," I disregarded the sniffing and snarling at my ankles and stuck out my hand.

"Glad to meet you. Don't mind Tootsie," he said. "She's a good little watchdog, handy to have around. Knows who to bite and when. She took a little chaw on a prowler last Monday night. Hugh Crespin's the name."

"I see you haven't smartened up about your son," Pat was looking toward the two young huskies. "I thought he might be in college, where he belongs."

"Don't start that again, Pat. Junior belongs right where he is. All this will be his some day. I don't know what I'd do without him."

"Where's Jerry? Still around? Running a boat for you?"

"My nephew?" Crespin made a vague gesture of resignation. "What can I do? He's my sister's boy and I'm stuck with him. Boating is all he knows. Thirty-five, and still a big, overgrown kid. You know the story—beer with the boys, poker whenever he feels like it, comes to work whenever he feels like it."

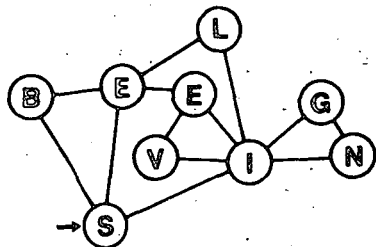
# IT'S A CRIME...

If you enjoy solving ingenious puzzles, and you haven't discovered **GAMES Magazine!**

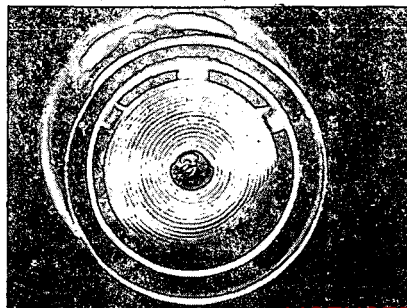
1. Each equation contains the initials of words that are needed to complete it. Find the missing words. For example,  $36 = \text{I. in a Y.}$  would be  $36 = \text{Inches in a Yard.}$

- a.  $20,000 = \text{L.U. the S.}$
- b.  $13 = \text{C. in a S.}$
- c.  $\text{T.D. (and a P. in a P.T.)}$
- d.  $9 = \text{I. in a B.G.}$
- e.  $9 = \text{P. in the S.S.}$
- f.  $30 = \text{D.H.S.A.J. and N.}$
- g.  $50 = \text{C. in a H.D.}$
- h.  $212 = \text{D. at which W.B.}$
- i.  $1 = \text{D. at a T.}$
- j.  $12 = \text{S. of the Z.}$

2. Begin at the arrow and proceed from letter to letter in any direction via connecting lines to form a familiar saying. Every line and letter will be used one or more times.



3. WHAT IS THIS FAMILIAR OBJECT?  
Clue: Hot tip



As a mystery reader, you pride yourself on your cleverness, your ingenuity, your powers of logic and deduction. That's why we want to introduce you to **GAMES**—the magazine that's every bit as clever and ingenious as you are!

Every month, **GAMES** brings you unique word and number puzzles that will really intrigue and entertain you...fascinating cryptograms...challenging map puzzles, logic problems, visual puzzles and trivia quizzes, all too irresistible to pass up!

But that's not all! You can enter imaginative contests, and pit your knowledge strategy or skill against other readers, to win valuable prizes. And if you love crosswords, you'll find plenty of unusual ones to keep you satisfied.

Plus, you'll find reviews of new games and news of special tournaments. You'll also learn to play exciting games from other lands.

So if you like your fun "spiked" with a bit of a challenge, it's time you discovered **GAMES Magazine**. Don't miss out—subscribe today!

(If subscription card is missing, send \$14.97 for one year (12 issues) to **GAMES**, P.O. Box 10147, Des Moines Iowa 50340.)

**NOTE:** Enjoy solving the puzzles at leisure (the answers are on the back of the subscription card). They're just a hint of all the challenging fun waiting for you in every issue of **GAMES**!

JDV30

"You're too kind-hearted, Hugh," Pat said. "Anyone else would have given him the heave long ago, sister's boy or no."

"What the hell," Crespin said. "At least he's honest. I had to fire Charley last week—he was playing one for me, one for you with the passenger fares. Jerry's a good wheelman and a good mechanic when he's in the mood. He's getting married. I've got my fingers crossed that'll change him." He smiled. "That cute little waitress at Grogan's has been holding out till he could offer her more than a big grin and a few kind words, but the lucky dog's come into some money lately—a bachelor uncle in San Francisco. Joe Baron. Speak of the devil, here he comes. . . ."

He pointed to a chubby, round-faced, darkhaired man sporting a comfortable beer belly. He was moving up the gangway from float to barge.

"He hit a big daily double last week, too," Crespin went on. "The word seems to have gotten around that he struck it rich. They must think he keeps his money under the mattress. He had a drop-in early this week. Nothing gone, but they left his place a mess."

"Very interesting," Pat gave me a look that told me he really did find it interesting. "What else has been happening around here? What's new and exciting? I notice you've got a couple more barges. You going into the lighterage business?"

"You've got to be kidding, Pat," Crespin said. "Lighterage in this port is dead. Everything moves on wheels. This old hull is about ready for the graveyard. It's time to replace it. The other barge I'm converting to a houseboat, strictly on speculation. If I find a customer, maybe I've got myself a new business. Old barges are a dime a dozen. You know me—always branching out."

"I already have a houseboat or I'd be interested myself. But Phil's in the market for a boat."

"I'm thinking about it," I said. I was thinking of buying a boat the way I was thinking of buying an elephant.

"I've got a couple of lemons I could be persuaded to part with." Crespin flashed me a smile and grabbed my arm. "I've got a live one here, Pat. I can't let him get away. Excitement? We had it early last week, cops and robbers right out of 'Kojak.' But I suppose you know about that—the Farallon robbery."

"What I read in the papers," Pat said. "A pretty fair day's work. Who's that blond bruiser working with your son?"

"A new man, Butch," Crespin said. "Charley's temporary replacement. Put him on Monday. Started hanging around early last

week, couldn't get rid of him. Gave me a sad story about being stranded in New York, said he knew boats from a hitch in the Coast Guard and wanted a few weeks' work to put together enough money to get back home."

"Where's that?" Pat asked.

"He didn't say," Crespín shrugged. "I didn't ask for his pedigree. He doesn't talk much, but he's a hustler, a glutton for work—comes here on his days off. A good mechanic—knows his stuff."

"Introduce me. The engine on the *Barbara Ann* is running a little rough. Maybe he'd like to pick up some extra cash on his day off, look it over, find out what's wrong."

"He'll be along in a minute," Crespín said. "It's almost lunch time. Come on, let's go in the office."

We followed him around to the side of the barge and through the door into a room furnished with couches, chairs, tables, reading material—a waiting room for launch customers.

Jerry and the blond came in right after us, and Jerry asked, "That gasket for the *Sea Giant* get here yet?"

"It's on the way. Karapoulos' port captain called a few minutes ago. He's having a hemorrhage. You better eat fast or you'll be gnawing your knuckles for lunch."

"I thought you might want Butch to go, let him get his feet wet. You want me to finish that valve job, don't you?"

Butch gave Jerry a peculiar look.

"Junior'll finish the valve job," Crespín said. "I got other work lined up for Butch. Who's running this place, you or me?"

"You're the boss," Jerry said. "Hello, Pat. It's good to see a friendly face. It's been a long time."

"You're always out on a job when I come around," Pat said. "Let me congratulate you. I hear that little gal is making an honest man of you."

"Thanks. I finally broke her down. I got to grab her fast before she changes her mind. We can afford it now. Luck's been running for me."

"So Hugh tells me," Pat said.

"All right if I go to lunch now, boss?" Jerry asked Crespín.

"Don't be cute," Crespín said. "Butch, stick around—Pat O'Hara here wants to talk to you about his boat. Pat's a retired dock-master."

The blond guy looked on the sunny side of thirty. He had deep-set eyes, a pug nose, and very white skin. He wasn't very tall but



he was well put together—barrel chest, thick neck, wrestler's arms. He spoke politely and in a soft voice. He didn't seem to be a friendly, outgoing type. He'd been eyeing me carefully, as if he didn't know what to make of me. But he seemed to understand and answer intelligently when Pat described his boat, its engine, the trouble. He begged off for the time being, saying he was just getting himself organized.

"Let me know when you have a little time." Pat didn't push it. "Hugh has my phone number." He turned to Crespin. "I won't take any more of your time. Phil and I will be around Sunday to have a look at your boats, if you're serious about selling. I know you don't work Sundays, so tell whoever'll be minding the store to expect us."

We went out to the street. Going up the gangway, I noticed Butch and Jerry, in separate boats quite a distance apart, eating their lunches out of brown bags. Apparently they didn't seek out one another's company.

I asked Pat, "What's this with your asking that Butch fellow about checking out your engine? It was purring like a kitten when we went fishing last Sunday."

"I just wanted to hear him talk, get a line on where he's from. Make it Ohio or Indiana and you wouldn't be far off, same general midwest area as the other guy, his partner. You notice Butch ducked the job. Spending Sunday at Crespin's is important to him."

"His partner? In the Farallon job? Why fool around, if you know who he is? Shouldn't we go to the police right now?"

"Not so fast," Pat said. "It's not that simple. Knowing and proving are two different things."

We were moving down toward the Staten Island ferry. Pat stopped altogether and, one foot atop the backing log edging the bulkhead, looked out at the river.

"Take a look back toward Crespin's and tell me what you see," he said.

I took up a position beside him. Butch and Jerry, finished eating, were acting strangely. Jerry was jumping around from one boat to another, examining them. Butch, up near a boat's bow, was fussing with something in his hand but he hardly took his eyes off Jerry. Every few seconds Jerry stole a glance at Butch.

"Get the picture?" Pat said. "Let's walk back home now. I know you can't wait to hear some more about the Eagle Street robbery."

"Start talking," I said.

“So,” Pat began, “the one thief got away clean. A week later, in the regular rotation—we dockmasters were shifted every three months—I happened to draw the district, for the first time in a couple of years, where the shootout took place. As was the practice, my first day back I walked through with the outgoing dockmaster. That was so he could brief me on what problems there were and introduce me to the key people. There were a lot of changes—new pier tenants; a new coal operation, just a truck-mounted crane and a coal barge, on open wharfage, amounting to running a coal yard at the bargain rate of five dollars a day; new boats at Crespins; a couple of new marginal-street parking lots. I also discovered that a gang of vagrants had taken up lodgings in one of the vacant piers not far from the Fulton Fish Market. I asked the dockmaster about this setup, and he shrugged a live-and-let-live shrug. So long as they behaved, didn’t set fires, didn’t do damage, why kick up a fuss?”

“As I recall, there were about five of them, and all were a cut above the usual stumblebum hanging around the piers. First of all, they were fairly young, and vigorous, and appeared to be in good health. They took a drink—all but one of them—but not a one of them was an out and out wino. I can’t remember seeing any of them paralyzed drunk. Economic conditions were bad, and they seemed not to be hopeless derelicts but just homeless guys, down on their luck. They were aggressive and pretty ingenious in providing for their wants. All the fish they wanted was theirs for the picking up off the ground or rescuing from the trash at the market. Wood and coal could be scavenged in the same way. Three or four yards handling anthracite were not far off. The old front office that was their main hang-out had a pot-bellied stove, left over from the days when a watchman was assigned to the pier.

“These fellows ran the place like a commune, splitting up the details. There was an Automat nearby—one of the things I miss, Phil, from New York’s good old days—and one guy would work it. I caught his act one day, saw him hanging around and scooping up uneaten bread and rolls left behind by patrons. Another guy would make a trip crosstown to the produce market—now at Hunt’s Point but then almost directly across Manhattan on the North River. There they could gather up all kinds of vegetables and fruit, maybe not in prime condition but good enough to eat. At the banana terminal just down the river they could always pick up bananas. In those days bananas were still being transported on the stalk

and not in boxes.

"They weren't lacking in initiative. One day I ran across two of them wheeling a rickety old baby carriage loaded with sick-looking fish through the streets of the old East Side. I didn't wait around to see if the police or the Health Department nailed them, but there they were, in the best tradition of private enterprise, peddling fish to raise cash for coffee, wine, whatever.

"They had sleeping accommodations set up, using newspapers, cardboard cartons, burlap bags, rags, even a few old army blankets they'd managed to get their hands on. What with the stove, and sleeping in their clothes, they were able to stay warm in the worst weather.

"What was most unusual was their being semi-permanent lodgers at their waterfront hotel and not drop-ins for a night or two. That there was a group was unusual, too. Most waterfront bums are loners.

"One among them caught my attention, a pretty big guy, tall and well-built, who carried himself erectly. Whoever he was and whatever twist of the road had brought him there, he hadn't lost his self respect. He had cold blue eyes and a hard look generally. The other guys must have been aware he was a tough nut, not to be fooled with. Right off I gathered he was top dog. They called him Frost, but not to his face. The name seemed to fit his personality perfectly. In his presence, they called him Sarge, with the respect that comes of fear.

"Anyhow, this one guy just didn't seem to belong there. He didn't drink or smoke. My guess was he was in his early thirties and had a military background. Like the others, he was usually unshaven but his hair didn't have that wild look that comes of going six or eight months without a haircut. It tipped me off that he was a rookie at the waterfront bum business. That and his coat, which was dirty but not yet filthy dirty and wasn't threadbare tattered. The coat looked expensive and so did his fairly respectable-looking suit.

"Another thing, he would barely speak to me, usually just nod when we met. He didn't invite or prolong conversation. The others were friendly, even ingratiating. They offered to do favors for me, check wharfage, keep me posted on things I might be interested in. I declined, of course.

"This big guy started me thinking, especially when I realized he was spending a lot of time prowling around the vacant piers. I

wondered what for. Anything worth salvaging had long since been taken. I have a naturally suspicious nature and it occurred to me he might possibly be the guy who'd gotten away after the Eagle Street robbery. Did he have reason to believe the securities were somewhere on one of the piers, hidden there by his confederate who'd been shot dead? The story of the theft was well publicized. The big guy would know exactly where the other fellow was killed, and where the briefcase was found.

"Before long, my suspicions deepened. I noticed a pattern in his movements that pointed to his making a methodical search of the piers, while at the same time ducking me. Usually I made just one trip through the district daily, starting at the lower end and working my way upriver. I was chagrined to discover he had me clocked and was keeping a jump ahead of me. He was timing his visits to the piers so he didn't show up until after I'd come and gone. He was up to something and was going to some pains to keep me from finding out what.

"Temporarily I departed from my routine. I took to starting, in a random way, at a different point in the district every day. Some days I would go north, then double back. Other days I would do the reverse. So I began to bump into him at different piers at different times. He was pretty cagey himself, changing his own routine, trying to outguess me. When we chanced to meet he'd nod in that standoffish way and hang around idly till I left. But I moved quietly and came upon him unexpectedly often enough to catch him in the act. He was examining every inch of the lower level of every pier. Ransacking offices, boiler rooms, cribs, gear rooms, toilets; poking into sand pails; scrutinizing fire hoses, unrolling them and prodding for telltale lumpiness inside; checking the supporting columns. He even went so far as to remove the under-pier fire access hole covers one by one—the miniature manhole covers, about ten inches in diameter. I think I've told you how they drop special, rotating nozzles down these holes. Spray the water in a circular pattern to fight under-pier fires. Water pressure and ball bearings do the trick. Anyhow, he overlooked nothing in his search.

"Well, one morning he was checking access holes when one of his buddies happened to wander past the pier. I had stepped into one of the offices from a streetside door, and was watching the big guy through a crack in the wooden partition. This pier mate was an inoffensive little guy, very thin, with scruffy red hair, a ruddy complexion, and sad, watery blue eyes. They called him Hank. On

his way back from a scrounging detail, he was pushing a baby carriage loaded with scraps of lumber and a wooden box full of coal.

"Hank saw Frost inside the pier and for a moment stood watching him. Then Hank, leaving the baby carriage outside, walked up to Frost, who had broken off his access hole operation and was just standing there looking toward the street. I couldn't hear what they said but an argument developed. Next thing Frost had him by the throat with one hand and whacked him a vicious backhand swipe across the face with the other. He let go of Hank's throat, spun him around, and helped Hank's retreat along with a swift kick in the pants. Frost was laying down the law to Hank: Get lost. Keep out of my face.

"Next morning as I was in the lower end of the district starting my rounds, whom did I see shuffling toward me but Hank. When he got close I saw he was in sad shape—a black eye, nasty cuts on his face, a split lip. He was mopping at his bloody nose with a dirty handkerchief and half muttering, half sobbing to himself. I asked him what happened. Frost had just beaten him up for no reason, chased him off the pier, told him to get the hell out of the neighborhood if he didn't want another sample of the same treatment. . . . I asked him what he was going to do, where he was going. To the Seamen's, he told me. A good idea, I said. He looked so miserable and forlorn I handed him a ten dollar bill, which he accepted gratefully and promised to pay back.

"When I got to the flophouse pier the other fellows were all there except for Frost. They didn't look too happy. None of them said a word about Hank. The following day I inquired casually. They told me Hank had departed for parts unknown, but not a whisper about Frost beating up on him.

"January was history and Washington's birthday was coming up. Enough was enough. What happened to Hank disturbed me. I was afraid the same thing could happen to one of the others. Frost was a brutal man, capable of any kind of violence up to and including murder. For their own protection, they had to be separated from him.

"I know it's February,' I told them late that afternoon. 'The weather is pretty rotten, and I know how it is with you fellows. You've got to go, but I'm not going to dump you out into the cold. Start making other arrangements, but don't be too long about it.'

"All of them except the big guy pleaded with me. They had

nowhere to go. Be a good guy, they begged, let them stay until the weather turned milder. . . . I told them I'd been a good guy long enough. There were other places they could get a bed in New York, maybe even a job if they wanted one bad enough and weren't too particular. If they were seamen on the beach, they must have known they'd be welcome at the Seamen's Church Institute and similar nice, clean places. The truth was they were independent spirits. They might have owned nothing except their skins and their souls but they didn't want to go begging for the kind of help that comes with strings attached. They had no stomach for being preached at or commiserated over.

"But that is by the by. The big guy just stood off to the side and gave me a cold look out of his hard eyes and frozen face and said nothing. A nothing that said a lot.

"That was the gist of it. I wasn't ready to push too hard. I have a prejudice against seeing a poor unfortunate freeze to death because he has nowhere to get in out of the weather. I'd run into more than one stiff dead of exposure on the piers, and I can tell you it's an unpleasant sight. My idea was to give them time to find another flop. There were other piers, other places. The only one I expected a problem with was the big guy."

We were off the waterfront by this time, near an East Side subway station. I said, "Pat, I'm bushed from all this walking. You move too fast for me. Would you mind if we took the subway home?"

"You go home. Get yourself a night's rest. Meet me at Lacey's tomorrow morning. We'll take a little ride on the *Barbara Ann*."

"That's a deal," I said. Pat had something in mind. I expected an interesting trip.

**V**ery early next morning we shoved off from Lacey's Marina. Pat, at the wheel, asked me, "You know where we're going?"

"Yep," I answered.

"You know why, don't you?"

"You know why. I just have a general idea," was all I could answer.

"In that case," Pat said, "let me finish my story about the Eagle Street robbery. That should give you a better idea."

He resumed his yarn.

"I knew the big guy wouldn't budge off that pier until he'd finished his mission. I was almost certain what it was, and that made him a dangerous man. I was wary of him. Not shaking-in-the-boots

afraid, just wary. And curious as hell. I made keeping tabs on him my main business. He was rooting through piers far beyond the distance his buddy had made it up the river before he was shot.

"Then something unusual happened. A painting contractor was doing the interior of a pier all the way up near Corlear's Hook. One Monday afternoon the painting foreman asked if I'd run into a big ladder in my travels. No, I hadn't, I told him. But I'd be on the lookout. The ladder had somehow been taken off the pier over the weekend. The contractor kept no watchman on the pier but the street doors were locked. So the ladder's disappearance was something of a puzzle.

"Next morning I made it my business to check the interiors and outer aprons of all the piers carefully. Following a hunch, I began my search with the piers lying above the fish market. Sure enough, inside one of the piers, hidden under old timbers, rags, pallets, newspapers, whatever happened to be handy, I came across the ladder, lying flat along the deck up against the piershed. I wasn't going to tip my hand. I was after something bigger than returning it to the rightful owner. That afternoon I doubled back. The ladder was not there. But something else was. Half the pier deck, from the inner end out, was littered with large quantities of pigeon debris: feathers, bits of this and that from nests, scrawny yellow-blue dead chicks, broken egg shells. Now, under the roofs of vacant piers is a favorite nesting spot for Manhattan pigeons. Up there is a good sheltered spot, out of the wind and rain, and beyond the reach of cats and rats. On some empty piers the accumulation of pigeon droppings becomes like a heavy, dirty gray carpet. Once I laughingly suggested to a commissioner that he advertise for bids on the guano concession on a certain pier. He didn't think it much of a joke. My point is, pigeons and piers go together. Pigeons leave unmistakable signs of their presence on the unoccupied piers and, to some extent, on the occupied ones. On every pier you'd expect to see feathers, down, bits of shell, an occasional fallen chick. But now all of a sudden there was a heavy concentration of pigeon litter in just one part of this one pier. Why?

"The ladder, of course, was the key. My aloof, determined friend was using the ladder to get up onto the rafters and climb out and make a foot by foot search of what was up there under the roof. He couldn't help knocking all kinds of stuff from the rafters onto the pier deck. The big guy was convinced the securities were stashed somewhere on one of the piers. He'd searched every place, likely



and unlikely, at deck level. Now he'd moved upstairs, using the appropriated ladder.

"This development convinced me police intervention was called for. I wasn't brave enough or foolish enough to tackle the big guy all by myself. Cornered, he could be dangerous. I informed my chief, who informed the commissioner, who quietly informed the police commissioner. There were no written reports on this one, no shuffling of papers up a chain of command. That same afternoon the police came in with a cherrypicker, one of those jobs with a cab atop a boom used for working on overhead street lights. Before that, they planted plainclothesmen all over the place—in parked cars across the street, dressed like longshoremen and marching up and down, dressed like bums and ducking into the nearby piers. The big guy had wandered off on a break and didn't catch on till he returned to the pier and caught sight of the cherrypicker. He made tracks pronto, as fast as he could. But they grabbed him on

---

***"Be careful!" Pat warned. "He's dangerous." I'd made a mistake in leaving my gun at home. But Pat hadn't clued me in.***

---

the street, subdued him, and locked him up on suspicion of vagrancy.

"To wind up the story, the police found the securities, wrapped in old newspaper and tied by a length of rope atop a cross girder in the pier just below the one where his partner was shot. The big guy was wanted in three states for armed robbery and murder. The police quietly returned the securities to the rightful owner. I received a substantial reward and a chewing out from the commissioner for not informing him of my suspicions right off the bat. The recovery and reward were never publicized. You don't suppose I could ever afford a boat like the *Barbara Ann* on my pension and what I saved from my earnings over the years, do you, Phil?"

"No opinion," I said.

"So the point is, just as with the Eagle Street case, the Farallon loot was not thrown away haphazardly. I have a pretty good idea

of what happened to it. Butch doesn't fit in any more than Frost did. He's out of place, and on the scene for just one purpose."

We'd reached the Brooklyn shore opposite Crespin's. I was at the wheel now. As we cruised slowly, Pat peered through field glasses across the river. He put down the glasses, took the wheel, and cut across the river toward Manhattan. Just as we approached, a launch pulled out from Crespin's and swung downriver. Butch was at the wheel. Rough looking seamen en route to a ship at anchor jumpacked the launch.

From the water side I got a real appreciation of how big an operation Crespin had.

"How the devil does he keep track of this flotilla?" I asked Pat. "He must have a couple dozen boats."

"Twenty-nine, to be exact," Pat said. "He collects boats the way some people collect stamps. But don't worry about Hugh Crespin keeping track. Not much gets by him."

We eased toward a landing float. Jerry was poking around a boat nearby.

"Is the boss around?" Pat yelled over to him.

"In the office," Jerry called back unsmilingly. "You better get him fast. He'll be leaving in a few minutes. He's going over to Hoboken to look over some boats."

"What's the matter, Jerry?" Pat said. "You look as if a mountain fell on you. Did the girl change her mind?"

Jerry certainly looked unhappy and maybe a little edgy.

"Had another break-in last night," he said. "Second time in a week. Left the place a mess. I don't like it. What the hell do they think they can get from me?"

"Anything important missing?" Pat asked.

"That's the hell of it," Jerry said. "Far as I can tell, they didn't take anything, just turned the place upside down and inside out. I don't get it. They left a brand new color TV."

Pat said, "Maybe they already had a color TV. My advice is, get yourself a mean dog. That'll stop the break-ins."

Jerry helped secure the *Barbara Ann*.

"You wait out here, get acquainted with Jerry," Pat told me, hopping easily down onto the float. "I want to have a word with Hugh."

I made harmless chitchat with Jerry. Or tried to. He didn't seem much interested in my buying a boat. My impression was he couldn't wait for us to leave. We did, after Pat returned in about

fifteen minutes. Pat told Jerry we'd be back the next day. Jerry didn't seem thrilled.

Before we hit midstream Jerry was back at work, checking over the old tires hung against the sides of the boats as fenders.

"Jerry's pretty conscientious," I remarked.

"Isn't he ever," Pat said. "There's nothing more to be accomplished around here today. Tomorrow we'll find out what's cooking in the pot. Are you up to some fishing? I hear there are some nice flounder biting off Norton's Point. We'll stop at Lacey's first, so you can call your wife, tell her you're staying over on the houseboat tonight. I've got some calls to make myself."

**W**e caught some nice flounder and a few porgy. I cleaned. Pat cooked. We had a fine dinner, watched a little TV and hit the sack early.

Next morning we made a fast run to the East River, slipped past the Battery, and skirted the Manhattan shore. We detoured around a tug escorting a couple of loaded coal barges. Pat waved to a police launch speeding past us. We turned into the next slip down from Crespin's, where we hove to against the fender piling of the narrow, unshedded pier. Through the rows of bearing piles we got a pretty clear view of Crespin's layout. Pat jockeyed the boat back and forth. I couldn't resist asking him what the idea was.

"To be able to see the street and the gangway as well as the boats. Why?"

"In case company comes around."

I'd done some heavy thinking overnight about why he'd not invited me to his chat with Crespin. I guessed it was Crespin he was expecting. What he had up his sleeve was a mystery.

We watched for almost an hour. It was a strange scene. Jerry was prowling along the floats, giving the boats a going over. He was paying the fenders a lot of attention but not neglecting the cockpits, lifting seats, cushions, everything movable, taking out and replacing the life preservers. Whenever he had to go to the office to answer the phone—which was rigged to ring outside if no one was in the office—he looked over at Butch. The calls didn't keep him in the office more than a couple of minutes. Butch, busy doing something with an engine on one of the inshore floats, wasn't too busy to keep tabs on Jerry, especially when Jerry was not looking his way. When Jerry caught Butch at it, Butch immediately

shifted his eyes back to the engine.

Jerry had moved to the last string of boats bobbing at the most distant line of floats when Pat spoke again.

"Phil, it's time for your shopping spree at Crespin's boat supermarket," he said.

He got the *Barbara Ann* going, gave the whistle signal as we backed out past the pierhead, and nosed into Crespin's slip. A police launch moseying lazily downriver went past us. Again Pat gave it a wave.

Jerry waved to us half-heartedly as we went by. Butch paused to stare our way. Pat guided the *Barbara Ann* up to the office barge and made fast. We went over to Butch.

"Don't let us keep you from anything important," Pat told him. "Phil's shopping for a boat."

Butch kept his expression under control. All we got was a nod before he picked up a good-sized wrench and went to work unfastening a coupling.

I pretended a great interest as Pat pounded on the hulls, looking for rot and weakness; scratched at metal, looking for rust; checked the fender systems; looked at the engines. Butch and Jerry needed extra sets of eyes to watch us and each other. It was almost comical the way their heads kept swinging around.

Pat himself got into the swing of things, glancing toward the street, then back to Jerry. Pat is not a nervous type, but I could tell he was getting a mite anxious when his glances toward the street started coming increasingly closer together. Then the worried look melted from his face, and I knew why when I spotted a familiar figure crossing the street and heading for the gangway.

"Here comes Hugh Crespin, all dressed up," I said.

"Just in the nick of time," Pat said. He nodded to Crespin, who nodded back. Crespin came around the side of the barge nearest us and stepped into the office. Butch's back was turned and he did not see Crespin arrive. Neither did Jerry. Jerry was intent on a fender tire, running his fingers along the tire's inside part, the part that fits onto the wheel rim.

Jerry lingered over that one tire, shifting his position so we were shielded from sight of what he was doing. He fiddled around some more and I caught a glimpse of something brown and flat in his hand.

"Don't stare at him that way and advertise we're watching him," Pat said sharply. "Turn around. Face the street."

I obeyed, but I noticed Pat, facing south, was positioned so he could see Jerry out of the corner of his eye.

"What's happening?" I asked Pat.

"Butch is making his move, toward Jerry. You can look now. The cat is out of the bag."

Butch, clutching his wrench, was springing up onto the boat. Jerry spun around to face him, letting the brown object drop to the deck. He snatched up a piece of pipe about two feet long. Holding the pipe aloft, he braced himself. From a few feet apart, they faced one another, arguing. Their voices rose. Jerry pointed the pipe at Butch, making little jabbing motions. He screamed something. For answer Butch moved a step closer, shouting as he moved. Jerry shouted back. Their angry words carried across the water and over the sound of a boat engine not far off but they were not distinguishable. Waving the wrench menacingly, Butch tried to force Jerry to give ground so he could step past him. But Jerry would not yield. Instead he kept thrusting with the pipe and shifting to keep between Butch and the brown object. Butch swung the wrench. Jerry dodged out of the way. That gave Butch the opening he wanted. Waving the wrench in front of him, in one quick motion he started the engine with the other hand. His blueprint was clear: get rid of Jerry and then get going on the boat, ditch the boat, maybe at the Whitehall Ferry Terminal, and then git.

"Come on, Pat, we've got to break that up before someone gets killed," I yelled breaking into a trot that started the float bouncing.

"Be careful, Phil," Pat warned, from right behind me. "He's dangerous and desperate."

I'd made a mistake in leaving my gun at home. But Pat hadn't clued me in, and I hadn't expected to stay overnight at his place.

Up ahead they still faced one another, threatening, circling, handicapped in their movements by the confined maneuvering space. As we drew near Butch began a straight down smash that turned out to be a feint. On the way down his arm jerked to the left and then came horizontally to the right in a vicious backhand swipe. Jerry tried to fend off the blow with the pipe. Metal rang on metal. But the wrench also caught a piece of his hand, jarring the pipe loose. It clattered to the deck. Jerry grabbed for it and shook his injured hand. He cursed and faced his antagonist again. Butch aimed an overhand shot at Jerry's head. Jerry ducked and swayed to the side. The wrench glanced off his upper left arm. Jerry grunted and pressed forward, closing with Butch, trying not

to give him swinging room. Butch rammed hard into Jerry like a blocker taking out a defensive lineman. He knocked Jerry backwards, off balance, and tunneled under him, grasping him around the thighs and pitching him overboard by sheer muscle power. The man was a brute for physical strength.

As I jumped into the boat, Pat yelled, "Don't do anything foolish. The police are on the way."

"Thanks," I said. The sound of another boat engine was getting louder. "But it's too late to help us."

Butch was getting himself together, straightening up and turning toward us, snarling,

"Who sent for you? Get the hell out of here before you get hurt."

Pat, coming up alongside me, tripped over the pipe on the deck, stumbled, and started to fall backward. His feet went out from under him and his legs somehow got entangled with Butch's. Both went down, Butch more heavily than Pat, who somehow made a three point landing on his behind and the palms of both hands. Pat started to his feet. Butch, bending forward on his way up, was bringing his arm back to smash at Pat with the wrench. I flung myself on top of Butch and tried to pin his arms down. He struggled. He was a powerhouse and he was desperate. But I run something like two hundred and forty pounds and I do play a lot of handball.

Letting go of the wrench, he got me in a bear hug, trying to force me over onto my back. "Get the pipe," I said heavily to Pat. I hoped he was okay. "I need your help."

Pat didn't answer with words but I heard the repeated splat of the pipe pounding against the soles of Butch's feet. The fight went out of Butch. Pounding the soles of the feet with a nightstick is an old New York City police trick. I don't know exactly what it does, except jar the fillings out of the teeth. Pat kept up his tattoo on the helpless Butch. I scrambled to my feet and planted a size fourteen on Butch's chest and kept it there. With the other foot I kicked the wrench out of Butch's reach just in case he got any ideas.

Jerry was thrashing around in the water but he was in no danger. He was having trouble clambering up into the boat because of his battered hand and arm. Pat handed me the pipe and then bent to reach under Butch and pick up the badly rumpled manila portfolio. Butch, raging and cussing up a storm, tried to stop Pat but a little extra heel in the pit of his stomach discouraged that ambition.

A police launch, still a few yards away and braking, bumped up to the boat head on. Two cops with drawn guns stood at the prow.

"Hold everything," I yelled to them. "The party's over."

"Tell them to bring Butch and Jerry to the office," Pat quietly instructed me. He was already on the float.

The police fished the sputtering Jerry out of the water, handcuffed Butch, shut the engine off. The parade to the office began. Butch was cursing non-stop at Jerry and life in general and had to be prodded by the cops to keep moving. Jerry, dripping water, coughing, holding his right hand and making sounds of pain, managed to navigate on his own.

Crespin was standing behind the counter, Pat lounging against the front. The portfolio lay on the counter between them.

"There's your man, the laddie in handcuffs," Crespin told the tall, redheaded police sergeant in charge. "I should have known better than to hire that guy off the street. Shows what you get for being kind-hearted. Your Farallon case is solved. He got caught with the goods, right here." He shook the portfolio.

"Hello, Dan," Pat said to the sergeant. That Pat knew him didn't surprise me. "Sergeant Ryan," Pat identified him for us. "Dan, I suggest you open the portfolio and inventory the contents in the presence of witnesses. For the record, Phil Mandel here is working for Farallon."

"Sounds reasonable. I was thinking the same thing myself," Sergeant Ryan said. "Open it," he said to Crespin. "Let's see what we got."

While the two officers with him counted and recorded, Ryan did some questioning.

"Tell me what happened." He looked at Jerry.

"I was checking the boats, seeing if they were taking water and needed pumping, checking the lines, the fenders to see if they were secured right, the fuel. I happened to notice the envelope. I put it aside until I finished up. Next thing I knew he was coming at me with a wrench. I picked up a pipe to defend myself. He got the best of me and threw me overboard. That's it."

"That's about the way it was," I said. Which was true—as far as it went.

"Some story," Butch snickered.

"You got a better one?" Ryan asked.

"You wouldn't believe me."

"Try me."

"No thanks," Butch wound that up. I knew right there they'd never get anything out of him.



"Dan, let me give you my version of what I think happened," Pat said. "Our man here was fleeing after the Farallon robbery. The police were in pursuit. Naturally escape was uppermost in Butch's mind but the portfolio was a problem. It was a dead giveaway. On the other hand, he'd already taken a big risk and committed crimes to get his hands on the fortune inside it. He wasn't about to kiss it goodbye if he could help it. The boats along the inner floats were within throwing distance. If he could toss it into a cockpit, out of plain sight, so much the better. If he was lucky, it would still be there when he went back for it. If not, if someone at Crespin's happened upon it, the odds were good he wouldn't turn it in. There were ways of finding out who had it and getting it back. Butch wouldn't think twice about using force.

"He threw it into the cockpit, got away, came back that same night. He was driven off and forced to leave by the dog but not before he found out it wasn't where he threw it. He hung around till Crespin hired him. That gave him a chance to check about on the QT. Somehow the portfolio remained undetected till today. You know the rest."

"What do you say to that?" Ryan asked.

"Nothing," Butch laughed contemptuously.

"You need medical attention," Crespin said to Jerry, who was shivering and having a coughing fit. "I'll call an ambulance."

"Don't bother," Jerry's voice was a croak. "I'm all right. I'll see my own doctor."

"Suit yourself," Crespin said. "That hand looks pretty bad."

"Well, that does it," one of the officers doing the counting announced. "Two hundred and thirty-two thousand dollars."

Jerry's coughing was worse. He must have swallowed a gallon of water. He looked around feverishly and his eyes settled on Crespin. Jerry looked and sounded as if he really needed a doctor.

"A little short," Ryan frowned, and went back at Butch. "What'd you do with the rest of it?"

"You got it all figured out, you tell me," Butch said.

"Farallon won't be too unhappy," Pat put in. "Maybe the rest of it will show up, too. Maybe that quarter million was not an exact figure."

"There's always that possibility," Crespin said.

"They'll loosen you up at headquarters," Ryan promised Butch.

"Like hell they will," Butch said.

It occurred to me Jerry had some tall explaining to do, and there

were a few other loose ends. But I kept silent.

"I'd like to go home now. Is it okay?" Jerry asked.

I couldn't tell if he was addressing Crespin or Ryan.

"Go ahead," Crespin answered quickly, "before you cough your brains out. I'll hold the fort. Be sure to call me later, let me know how you are."

The police officer replaced the securities in the portfolio and handed it to Ryan.

"On your feet," Ryan ordered Butch. "Move it."

Still holding his battered wrist, Jerry shuffled to the door.

"We'll want a statement from you later," Ryan said.

"Okay, but I already told you everything."

The police moved out with their prisoner right behind Jerry.

"Mind if I use your phone?" I asked Crespin. "Gotta give Dwight Farallon the good news."

"Be my guest. Right inside, in the office. Hey, you'll be able to afford a real nice boat. You'll be getting a nice piece of change for this."

"Pat and I both," I let him know Pat was in on it, too. "Whatever we get, we earned."

I pushed through the little swinging door into the office. Returning, I happened to notice a manila portfolio, the twin of the one Ryan had carried off, tucked away on a shelf beneath the counter.

Pat was saying, "It worked out almost exactly the way it was supposed to."

"What do you mean almost?" Crespin snorted. "It was beautiful," he chuckled. "Just the way you planned. Butch fell for it hook, line, and sinker. For this magnificent haul," he reached under the counter for the portfolio and dragged from it a well-folded newspaper. "*A Wall Street Journal!*" Laughter rolled out of him.

"Don't keep that portfolio as a souvenir," Pat said dryly. "Get rid of it."

"So you made the switch?" I looked at Crespin.

"Of course. You don't think we'd be dopey enough to use the real McCoy as bait? Anything goes wrong, Butch gets away with a bundle. Let me explain what happened, Phil. Jerry found the portfolio on the boat where Butch ditched it. Jerry sticky-fingered a piece of the loot and hid the rest, still in the portfolio, expecting to take off with the whole shebang first chance he got when there was no audience around. He went half out of his mind when he

couldn't find it inside the tire where he stashed it and where I stumbled on it. I locked it up in the safe until I could figure out a way to hand it over to the Farallon outfit without getting Jerry in trouble. Leave it to Pat to come up with the answer to that. Meantime Jerry thought maybe he'd made a mistake in the boat—a lot of them look alike—or the fender tire had been replaced. He kept looking. That's what put Butch onto him. Butch was the prowler the dog drove off. Butch was the one who broke into Jerry's apartment. Real early today, before Jerry and Butch got here, I came by and tucked the bait where Jerry would be sure to find it. He did, and that smoked out Butch, which was the big idea. . . . Thanks again, Pat. You really used the old noodle. My thanks to both of you."

I thought he owed us a lot of thanks, but I kept quiet.

"Always ready to do a good turn for an old friend," Pat said. "Phil, let's get out of here."

**I**n the boat, I asked Pat, "What about that eighteen thousand dollars that's short?"

"Hugh had that right—as far as he went. Jerry sticky-fingered a piece of it. He was smart enough to cover himself by spreading word of that windfall from his uncle and a couple of other good luck lies. I checked out the inheritance, by the way. It existed, but it came to about three thousand dollars, which, incidentally, he hasn't collected yet. Still, Jerry thought he had it made—until fate stepped in."

"Fate?"

"Hugh Crespín. I was onto him from the start. You wouldn't have any way of knowing it, Phil, but Jerry isn't the only one who's shown signs of coming into a bonanza lately. Besides the two barges he talked about, he has two new tugboats and three new launches at his dock. By new I mean they weren't there when I walked past, without stopping in, last week. Hugh came across the portfolio when he was poking around the boats, doublechecking as he always does to see they're shipshape down to the last detail. And the first thing he did was invest some of that loose capital in new boats. Boats are an obsession with him. He's always kept twice as many as he had any real need for."

"How'd you get the rascal to admit he dug into the securities to finance the new boats?"

"Well, I didn't come right out and say I knew he had the Farallon

securities in his possession. I let him know I had the robbery figured out and knew who had the securities. I told him I'd be very sorry to see an old friend get hurt—ruined—by one stupid mistake. I told him I planned to go to the authorities, it was my civic duty. I asked him if he wanted that. Well no, he said, he didn't want that. He didn't want to see anyone get hurt. What did I suggest? He'd go along with anything I decided.

"What I wanted was two things. First, to nab the real criminal and see he got put away. Second, to get the securities back where they belonged. I outlined my plan. He agreed to it. That's all there was to it."

"I'll be darned. I never figured Crespin . . . tell me one thing, Pat. When you stumbled back there on the boat, how'd you manage to knock Butch off his feet?"

"A little trick of unarmed self defense my son picked up in the marines and taught me."

We were passing the downtown Brooklyn Port Authority piers.

"What's on the agenda, Pat?" I asked.

"First we're going to Zambino's for the good Italian meal you're going to spring for. Then I'm going to mass and say a prayer for the human race. You can come, too. It won't hurt."

"Why not?" I said.

It sounded like a good idea.

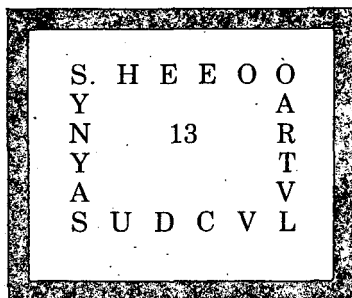
# UNSOLVED

by Jerome Meyer

Unsolved at present, that is, but can you work it out?

The answer will appear in the January issue.

This simple little diagram was found in the pocket of a suspicious character in October, 1944. Can you decipher it and write out the message it conceals? Par: 10 minutes.



*"Secret Code," taken from Puzzle Quiz & Stunt Fun by Jerome Meyer,  
© 1948, 1956, 1972 by Dover Publications, Inc., New York, N.Y.*

See page 154 for the solution to the November puzzle.

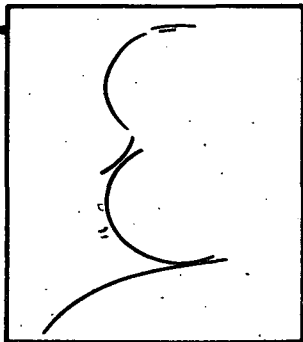


Ken Wahl makes a daring escape from a sabotaged cable car in *The Soldier*.

Copyright © 1982 Embassy Pictures

# MURDER BY DIRECTION

by Peter Shaw



**T**he behavior of heroes in international espionage thrillers seems to be growing more brutal and lawless with each movie that appears. **The Soldier** starts off with familiar enough premises: the Russians will stop at nothing; the CIA is so bound up by restraints that it cannot effectively counter Russian undercover activities. The answer has been to organize a team of a half dozen super-secret agents "completely outside the normal channels." The group's leader is Ken Wahl, who recently played the young cop in *Fort Apache, the Bronx*. Joined with him is a combination *Guns of Navarone-Dirty Dozen* group of agents who will stop at nothing.

One of them is a girl— apparently brought into the picture so there can be a love scene.

Working through intermediaries, the Russians kill the head of the CIA, steal a shipment of American weapons-grade plutonium, and then set it to blow up the Saudi Arabian oil fields in ninety-six hours. If Israel does not withdraw from the West Bank of the Jordan River, they will let the bomb go off and thereby destroy western civilization as it is now known. (The oil, we are told, will be rendered useless for three hundred years.) If looked at too closely these premises are a bit shaky, to say the least. But the real problem lies with the methods used to save the world.



Without giving away the plot, it is fair to say that the members of the special team are quite willing to blow up the world in order to save it. Indeed, they seem to prefer the big bang approach. As if to prove their remorselessness, they adopt the currently approved movie fashion of blowing large holes in anyone who gets in their way. A few months ago, in *Firefox*, Clint Eastwood saved all of us at the cost of the lives of America's best friends within Soviet Russia. In *The Soldier*, our heroes go so far as to kill off their fellow Americans on home soil—even in cases where doing so cannot be called strictly necessary to the success of their mission.

Mystery fans who prefer finesse to brutality will be outraged by one more thing in *The Soldier*: a blatant case of giving the audience false clues. When a mock execution has been staged to frighten a terrorist into giving information, the fake victim is shown being dragged struggling through a hallway. Only the audience sees this, so that there is no reason to doubt that the character on screen is fighting for his life. Eventually, though, he proves to have been in on the deception.

The director's manipulation of the audience in this scene makes one wish for some place to complain about sloppy movie

making. If a consumer watchdog committee is ever organized for the motion pictures, though, it shouldn't go too far in its complaints. For this reviewer was relieved rather than offended when, after a particularly brutal mass killing in *The Soldier*, one of the corpses just slightly raised his head to help out as he was being lifted off the ground.

Coming up on television in December is **Quiet as a Nun**, a three-part dramatization of the mystery novel by Lady Antonia Fraser. Filmed in England, the story takes place at a convent school and features a lady detective. She is Jemima Shore, a former pupil at the school and now a television interviewer. When a nun dies of starvation in the convent's tower, Jemima Shore—played by actress Maria Aitken—is asked to investigate.

The title for Lady Fraser's novel, her first, published here in 1977, comes from a gentle poem by Wordsworth. Her best-known work is *Mary, Queen of Scots*; her only other mystery is *The Wild Island*. (Lady Fraser is now married to the English playwright and screenwriter, Harold Pinter.) *Quiet as a Nun* will be shown over the Public Broadcasting Service network on December 21st, December 28th, and January 4th.

# FRAMES OF REFERENCE

by Peter Christian



**C**hristmastime, the carollers warn us, is a season of merriment. It can also provide moments of mayhem and murder—in a surprising number of films and stage dramas.

No one can be more benign and even beloved than jolly old Saint Nick, yet at times there is blood on that red suit. Popeye Doyle, the intrepid undercover cop of *The French Connection*, played by Gene Hackman, shivers as a street-corner Santa first to observe and then to pursue a drug dealer. Joan Collins is a chic suburban housewife who sees a figure in a Santa Claus suit outside the window of her isolated home in a well-made British anthology film, *Tales from the Crypt*—in a story called “All Through the House.” The figure is far from merry, however; he’s an escaped maniac intent upon breaking in. (What he doesn’t know is that she’s just murdered her husband under the Christmas tree.) Some years back, a play called *Who Killed Santa Claus?* had a run on the London stage, starring Honor Blackman (who later tussled with James Bond). As the curtain rose, a corpse was discovered dressed in the traditional costume, with a group of interesting suspects on hand. The play was a whodunit with a surprise ending; Arlene Francis took on the lead here, but it failed to make Broadway.

Robert Montgomery’s superb screen version of Raymond Chandler’s *Lady in the Lake*, in which a subjective camera substitutes

for hero Philip Marlowe, takes place throughout the Christmas season. Indeed, the film's opening credits are over a series of Christmas cards, the last one pulling away to reveal a gun. The music under the narration throughout the film uses familiar Christmas carols ominously, threateningly. Somewhat similarly, the first Mike Hammer mystery to reach the screen, Mickey Spillane's *I, the Jury*, uses Christmas cards of New York settings (the story takes place during the holidays) to establish locations at the start of various scenes. It also limited costly exterior camera setups, as the film was shot in 3-D.

Investigating a murder doesn't interfere with several rowdy Christmas revels—or is it the other way around?—for Nick and Nora Charles in *The Thin Man*, where holiday good times are always being uncorked. There is grim talk about Christmas "charity" and a young girl's suicide when *An Inspector Calls* on a haughty family in the screen version of J. B. Priestley's famed play, with Alastair Sim as the investigating policeman.

A few Canadian mystery films have touched on the holiday. Christopher Plummer dresses up as Santa Claus to rob a bank—intent on filling his sack rather than emptying it—at the beginning of *The Silent Partner*. And in the bizarre *Black Christmas*, the setting is a college sorority house at Christmas Eve, when most of the girls have gone home for winter vacation. One by one the remaining residents are murdered. Will Margot Kidder be among the victims? Is deranged Kier Dullea the killer? The suspense is quite chilling in this early film by Bob Clark, who later directed the Sherlock Holmes drama, *Murder by Decree*.

Sometimes even cheerful, bright-sounding titles—films like *Christmas Holiday* and *Christmas Eve*—can be unexpectedly dark and melodramatic. In the first, Deanna Durbin's evil husband, imprisoned for murder, returns to kill her; Robert Siodmak directed that film *noir* wrapped in tinsel. In the latter, most of Ann Harding's kin are up to no good, while one of them is out to rob her fortune. But in Frank Capra's moody, moving *It's a Wonderful Life*, a would-be suicide (James Stewart) on the eve of Christmas learns how, without his influence, the lives of those around him might have been shabbier, even criminal. His own hope is renewed, on the holiday of love and hope. A new beginning, and a good place to end.

FICTION

# Diminished Capacity

by  
**Loren D.  
Estleman**



*Illustration by Bachrun Lonele*

I was halfway through my third ham sandwich when the intercom on my desk razzed. Angrily, I choked down the mouthful I was working on and punched the speaker button, which was too small for my rather broad thumb.

"Sharon, I thought I told you

never to interrupt my lunch."

"Sorry, Matt." The mechanical voice coming from the speaker didn't sound sorry. The inference was that a man in my condition could afford to have his lunch interrupted now and then. "Seth Borden is here to see you. I thought you might be interested."

I sat back for a moment, frowning. A trip to Las Vegas for Dickens' venerable Miss Havisham was easier to envision than a visit from Seth Borden. He was the last person in Roseacre I would have expected to need an attorney.

"Herd him in." I rewrapped the uneaten portion of my sandwich and put it away in the file drawer, sweeping crumbs in after it off the desk top. By that time my visitor was standing awkwardly just inside the door.

Seth was older than the woodwork in the office and looked it. Little and wizened—"elfin," the Sunday supplement writers would call him—he wore gold-rimmed spectacles on a bent nose, a white shirt, and fuzzy gray pin-striped trousers under a leather apron streaked liberally with grease. His face and his white tousled hair and his hands were no cleaner, the latter calloused and stained a permanent brown from the many compounds and acids with which he worked. He looked out of place, as he would

have anywhere but amid the general disarray of his little workshop on Main Street.

I winched myself out of my chair and took his hand. It was warm and a little sticky. "Hello, Seth. Have a seat." I indicated the client's chair on his side of the desk.

He shook his head. "Can't stay. Got me some glue drying on two sticks of wood and can't let it set no longer'n ten minutes. I come to hire you, if you're in the mood for it." He fished a scrap of paper out of an apron pocket and handed it to me.

It was a subpoena ordering him to appear in court in two weeks to answer charges of diminished capacity filed by his daughter. Her name was typed at the bottom of the sheet: Mrs. C. Burton Scott. I gave it back. "What brought this on?"

"It's her husband put her up to it," he said. "When I refused to sell my shop to that developing firm of his, he got himself a lawyer and between them they cooked up this thing that says I'm crazy and should be committed. June always did do what Burton told her, so he got her to sign this here complaint. Once I'm out of the way, the shop's hers, and they can do what they want with it."

He seemed more sad than angry, which was like him. People like Seth Borden live their lives

never believing they'll get hurt. They get hurt a lot. The scenario made sense. No one who lived in Roseacre could recall a time when Seth's shop wasn't there. Dwarfed though it was by skyscrapers, the little brick structure occupied a substantial part of the business district and was worth hundreds of thousands to the developer fortunate enough to acquire it. Knowing what I did about C. Burton Scott, I wondered why I hadn't seen this coming.

Not that no one had tried before. Twenty years earlier, Bedelia Borden, Seth's sister and partner by grace of their father's will, had tried to bully Seth into selling her his half so that she could make a bundle from a man who wanted to buy up the block and build a department store. Her constant browbeating made her brother miserable and may have led to his wife Ruth's fatal heart attack at age forty-two. Bedelia might have won, having thus broken her brother's spirit, had not a severe recurrence of her childhood asthma forced her to abandon her interest and move to a dryer climate. No one had heard from her since and it was believed that she had died out west. Now the property was worth ten times what had been offered then.

The worst part was that in our state, the mere question of

a person's sanity raised by his heirs was sufficient to go to court. Then it was a matter of which psychiatrist was more eloquent in expressing his opinions. Neither medicine nor the law is an exact science.

"Any reason to doubt your sanity, Seth?" I asked.

He shrugged, a gesture not calculated to win a lawyer's confidence. "I forget things. Who don't? But I pay my bills and I run my business and I don't keep my socks in the icebox like my uncle started doing just before he died. *You* think I'm crazy?" His eyes were sharp behind the spectacles.

"I'm not a psychiatrist. But I think I can help you. First I think we should discuss my fee."

Before I could continue, the old man reached into another pocket and came up with a fat handful of greasy, dogeared bills, which he deposited atop my desk. I counted them. They came to twenty-three hundred dollars in twenties and fifties.

"I was saving for a new delivery van," he explained. "I'll be in the shop when you want me." He left, presumably to see to his two sticks of wood.

**M**r. and Mrs. C. Burton Scott lived north of the city along Route 22, in one of a string of neat little homes with neat

little lawns and a big car in every driveway. I swung my Japanese puddle-jumper in behind a blue Seville and climbed out, sweating as soon as I left the air-conditioned interior. It was late August and fat men were out of season.

June Borden Scott answered the door on my second knock. She was a small woman of thirty, attractive enough, but there was too much of her Aunt Bedelia in her face to suit me. As a boy I had seen the old haridan once or twice and gone home feeling chilled. "Yes?" Her voice was thin, almost non-existent.

I said, "I'm looking for Mr. Scott. Someone at his office said he was having lunch at home. I tried to call, but your number's unlisted. Matt Lysander. I think your husband remembers me."

He remembered me. Three seconds after June withdrew, he came storming up with fists clenched and stuck his big chin in my face. The rest of him was big, too, but I had eighty pounds on him, not that I cared to use them; he was all muscle. The shiny blue suits he always wore gave him an armored look. I'd noticed that in court, the day I persuaded a judge to fine Scott Developments fifty thousand dollars for using sub-standard materials in its construction. His appeal was still pending.

"What the hell do you want?" he demanded.

"Relax; this visit won't cost you a cent." Twisting the knife is one of my specialties. "I'm representing Seth Borden. Let's talk."

His expression changed from belligerent to uncertain. At length he stepped aside to admit me.

The living room was sunken, professionally decorated, and, I suspected, soundproof. I sat down in a brown crushed-leather chair without waiting for an invitation and stood my briefcase—an expensive prop—on the floor next to it. Scott took a seat beside his wife on the sofa opposite, but he didn't relax. He sat on the edge as if crouched to spring. Mrs. Scott looked like a frightened hamster in his presence. She'd inherited nothing of her aunt's overbearing manner.

I began without preamble. "Mrs. Scott, what makes you think your father is senile?"

Her husband started to answer for her. I held up a hand and he closed his mouth.

"He's—well, he has lapses," she began haltingly. "I invite him to dinner and he doesn't show up. When I call him to find out why, he says he never received an invitation."

"How many times has this happened?"

"I don't know. Three times,



I guess. Perhaps four. All in the past couple of months."

"That hardly indicates failing faculties," I commented. "I've forgotten my share of invitations, mainly because I was too polite to say I didn't feel like going."

"Oh, but that's not all! Just last week when I was shopping, Father walked right past me on the street without stopping to say hello. I had to call him twice before he turned around and recognized me. His own daughter!"

"Perhaps he was preoccupied."

"What's he got to be preoccupied about in his work?" said Scott, sneering.

I ignored him. "Let me ask you this, Mrs. Scott. Were you concerned about your father's mental condition before you related these incidents to your husband?"

"Don't answer that!" Scott stood. His beefy face was red. "You can leave here on your feet or head first, Lysander. Your choice. I don't have to listen to this sort of thing in my own house."

"You will in court." I rose, facing him. "Let's be honest. All you've got is a couple of incidents of absent-mindedness a first-year law student could tear apart, and even then it's just your word against Borden's. My psychiatrist will examine him,

the state's psychiatrist will examine him, they'll both find exactly what they want to find, and they'll cancel each other out in court. In the end all you'll gain is a bill from your lawyer. Still want to go through with it?"

The obstinate expression remained on Scott's face, but his shoulders sank ever so slightly. "None of this would be necessary if the old fool would just sell." He was still angry, but not at me. "Did he tell you what I offered him for that pile of bricks?"

I said he hadn't. Scott quoted an amount. My surprise must have showed, because he inflated before my eyes.

"You see?" he roared. "Would you turn down a chance to retire and never have to worry about money for the rest of your life? Borden did, and without blinking. If that isn't evidence of diminished capacity, you tell me what is!"

I picked up my briefcase, composing myself. A lawyer's first duty is to do what he can to keep his client out of court, and I'd given it my best shot. "Don't say I didn't warn you when the judge speaks his piece."

Mrs. Scott accompanied me to the door. Her face showed strain.

"It's true what Burton said," she whispered. "He wouldn't

have made an offer like that if it weren't my father. I know what you think of me. I'm sure it's what the whole town will be thinking when this gets out, but it isn't true. I just want to do what's best for Father, put him someplace where he won't harm himself. He won't move in here. I worry about him, all alone among those tools and things. You can see that, can't you?"

I went out without committing myself.

**B**ack at my office, I asked Sharon to get Fred Petrillo on the line. Fred was an assistant to an assistant at the State Bureau of Records and he owed me a favor.

"Petrillo." His businesslike tone was romanticized by a strong Puerto Rican accent.

"Fred, this is Matt Lysander. Can you find out for me who C. Burton Scott's partners are over at Scott Developments?"

"I wasn't aware he had partners."

"Nor was I, until about a half hour ago. A man who balks at a fifty thousand dollar fine doesn't make the kind of money offer that he just told me about without wincing. Someone's backing his play."

"I'll get right on it. Hour soon enough?"

"Dandy." I hung up and beat

it down to Seth Borden's shop.

The proprietor was in back, refinishing an old desk that hardly seemed worth the bother. The floor around him was a litter of discarded tools under a mulch of wood shavings. A bare bulb swung from a cord above his head, slinging shadows over the cold walls. They weren't as ancient as they appeared. A couple of decades earlier, Seth had turned bricklayer and had redone the whole shop from top to bottom. But like everything else about him, his remodeling carried a built-in patina of age that a forger of art masterpieces would have given his artistic eye to duplicate.

After we had exchanged greetings, I asked Seth about his recent lapses. He scowled, sighting along the edge of a drawer he was sanding.

"I said before, I forget things. And I didn't see June when I passed her. These here glasses are for close work. Sometimes I don't get around to taking them off. I bet even the President does that now and then."

"One diminished capacity case at a time, please," I said. "Why'd you turn down Scott's offer?"

"Didn't want to sell. I said, that." He resumed sanding.

"It's a lot of money. You could use it to buy a chain of shops and still take a trip around the world."

"I like it here."

"That's not good enough. This is a money-oriented society. It's going to look bad at the hearing when they ask you why you said no and that's the only answer you have."

He slid the drawer into place and straightened. "My father built this shop. I been working in it sixty years. There's still some things you can't buy."

"That's it?"

"That's the truth."

I let it go for the time being. Everybody lies to his lawyer. "Will you submit to a psychiatric examination?" I asked. "The judge will insist on it. I've a friend, Dr. Casper Fyfe, with whom I've worked before. He's good."

"Do what feels right." He traded his spectacles for a pair of goggles and plugged in an electric sander. The noise drove me out of there.

"Brace yourself." Fred Petrillo sounded smug over the telephone. "Two years ago, controlling interest in Scott Developments was snapped up by Global Enterprises."

I replaced the receiver. I don't remember if I thanked him; I was in shock. Global Enterprises was a semi-legal subsidiary of that organization with a five-letter name beginning with M that we're not supposed to talk about any more. It represented the organization's push to crack legitimate business,

but from the number of vice-presidents who had shown up in automobile trunks at airports recently, it was clear that tactics hadn't changed since Prohibition. I filed the knowledge away for possible use later. At the time I had no reason to believe I'd need it soon.

Sharon showed Casper Fyfe in two days later. Grinning at her over the remains of my family-size pizza, I folded the cardboard, chucked it into the wastebasket, and grasped Casper's hand. She glared back and closed the door harder than necessary on the way out. Sharon was a fitness freak.

"You aren't losing any weight." Casper sat down.

I said, "I grow fat in the saddle, like Napoleon. What you got?"

"You won't like it." Lanky and balding, the psychiatrist wore the obligatory hornrims and had a square jaw that must have offered a tempting target during his college boxing days. "In this doctor's opinion, Seth Borden is something less than stable."

"We should both be so crazy."

"I'm serious, Matt. You know I don't joke about my work."

My heart dropped a notch. "Give me the details."

"It isn't senility. He suffered a trauma somewhere in his past

that drove him permanently off center. If I had a couple of years I could probably find it, but that won't help you."

"Just how screwy is he?"

"Psychiatrists don't recognize that term," he chided. "There's enough abnormality to provide Scott's attorney with plenty of ammunition. His heart's not too good either, judging by his color, but that's beside the point. Any testimony I gave would do your case more harm than good."

I sat back, deflated. "Well, that leaves only one way to go." I told him what I'd learned about Scott Developments.

"You think it will affect the judge's decision?"

"I don't know. It's an informal hearing, and Morton's presiding. He's emotional. Maybe a plot by the mob to gain a foothold in Roseacre will sway him our way. It's worth a shot."

"Good luck." Casper recommended a psychiatrist to refute the generalities advanced by the state's shrink, after which we parted company. When he was gone I dialed Fred Petrillo at the capital for documentation to back up my forthcoming disclosure. The newspapers were going to fall in love with me.

**T**he hearing went as I'd expected. Scott's lawyer scored points with the psychiatric testimony

based on three visits with Seth Borden, a few of which I was able to knock down despite the handicap of my own expert's never having met the subject. I introduced Seth's ledger and balance sheets by way of showing that he was capable of operating his business. Judge Morton seemed unimpressed. At that point I'd hoped to present character witnesses who could swear to the old man's stability, but it turned out he had no close friends. Scott's man rested his case. Then I brought out the big guns.

News that organized crime had its eye on Roseacre played hell with decorum. Spectators babbled excitedly. Scott leaped to his feet, cursing me. A photographer burst a flashbulb in my face. Morton's gavel handle cracked while he was pounding. I rested my case. The hearing was recessed until the afternoon.

When it convened again, Seth was absent. Scrubbed and wearing an old suit frayed at the cuffs, he had left after the morning session muttering something about work to do. I sent Johnny, one of my favorite gofers, to the old man's shop to see what was keeping him. After twenty minutes the boy returned, alone and white-faced. He whispered in my ear.

I rose. Morton's ice-blue eyes impaled me. "Your Honor, I've

just learned that my client, Seth Borden, is dead."

June Scott gasped. Then the tears came.

Her husband put an arm around her awkwardly. The gallery buzzed.

"He was found collapsed on the floor of his shop moments ago," I continued. "A doctor is there now. It looks as if Mr. Borden suffered a heart attack—brought on, perhaps, by the strain of this morning's proceedings."

Judge Morton adjourned the court.

**P**ublic outcry was fierce when June Scott acquired the building from probate, but since an autopsy definitely established natural causes in the old man's death and no criminal acts could be traced directly to Global Enterprises, the law withdrew. June lost no time in deeding the property over to Global Developments.

The day the shop was set to come down, Sharon put through a call from C. Burton Scott. He sounded upset.

"Meet me there, shyster." The receiver clicked in my ear.

The site was right around the corner from my office. I found Scott in hardhat and shiny blue

suit standing outside a fence erected to keep out gawkers. His face was taut and pale. He seized my arm and steered me through the gate into the gutted shell of Seth's shop.

The wrecking crew had carted away everything worth salvaging, then gone to work with sledgehammers and crowbars. I was dragged stumbling over bricks and broken mortar, past hardhatted workers standing around idle, to a gaping hole in the south wall. Scott let go of me to snatch a flashlight out of an employee's hand, switched it on. The hard white beam lanced the darkness inside the cavity.

I can't say I was surprised. The trauma in Seth's past, the extensive remodeling, his unwillingness to sell when he knew it would mean the shop's destruction, formed a pattern I worked with often. I hadn't said anything because there was nothing to be gained by doing so. That cost me trouble with the police later.

Dental records confirmed it after two days, but from the start there was no doubt that the broken skeleton lying crumpled in one corner of the ruined wall belonged to Bedelia Borden, Seth's money-mad sister, dead these twenty years.

FICTION

# Wished-For Belongings

by Michael Bishop



**M**y mother did not want me. Like a Victorian foundling, I was abandoned to the doubtful charity of the world. Indeed, I first presented myself to the world beyond my mother's brief embrace in a picnic hamper haphazardly lined with handfuls of facsimile excelsior made from the sports section of the *Atlanta Constitution*. It was February and very cold when, as if by hobgoblin messenger service, this hamper materialized on the back seat of a black Ford parked beside a farmhouse in Meriwether County. The owner of both the automobile and the farmhouse rescued me from the Ford, carried me inside, and, despite the perfunctory pleas of his wife to keep me, promptly telephoned the authorities in Greenville.

I became a ward of the state. Over the next seventeen years I must have lived in a dozen different foster homes, usually in the care of kind-hearted but penurious people whose affection for me depended in part on the stipend they received for caring for me. Some families gave me up because the primary breadwinner had lost his or her job, some because I could not achieve viable truces with my accidental siblings, some because they found the fosterage of other folks' children less

profitable, emotionally and financially, than they had expected. The result was that I soon became a reluctant expert on lower-middle-class housing in western Georgia, from tin-roofed shotgun bungalows to double-wide mobile homes to high-ceilinged drafty boxes with screened-in sleeping porches. My opinion of and trust in people suffered in direct proportion to the involuntary enlargement of my architectural savvy—but I did not give up on either myself or others.

Instead I became a reader, thinker, and spectator, always with an eye on joining the crowd the moment an opening presented itself. Passed over in grade school for such prestigious semihonorary positions as Fire Marshal, Hall Monitor, and Lunchroom Attendant (I actually *heard* the capitals fronting these wonderful words), I got into the Library Club because all you had to do was express an interest, sign up, and report on a book every other week or so. I read Walter Farley and Vance Packard, A.A. Milne and Edward Gibbon. I ran for office every nine-week period for nearly two years (the longest I ever stayed in any of my foster homes), but could not win a single election. Finally, our advisor appointed me club historian. I learned a great deal



and worked assiduously at being liked.

To some extent, I *was* liked. My accomplishments were non-threatening. When my classmates vied among themselves for recognition, I faded obligingly into the background—even as an ostensible competitor. And, come the sure unraveling of my latest foster relationship, I faded away altogether, exiled by circumstance to another set of parental stand-ins and to another school where the glacial cast in my eye and the lovelorn way I hunched over my desk told everyone already there that I was a professional transient. It was okay to like me because I wasn't going to be around long anyway.

Through high school I maintained above-average grades. After failing an air force physical, I bummed around the Gulf Coast for a year, doing odd jobs for cash and haunting the history sections of all the local public libraries. Back in Georgia again, I wound up at the state university in Athens. Because the scholarships I applied for went to other young men and women, I paid for most of my expenses—tuition, board, books—by working as a counterman at a fast-food establishment not far from the campus.

This eatery was well known for its greasy chili dogs and its

equally oleaginous teenaged employees. Some of these white-capped coolies were decent if embarrassingly inarticulate kids. I remember one who could say nothing but “Walk her through the garden!”—a cry signifying that I was to confetti with cole slaw the next hot dog on our frantic assembly line, but an expression he also habitually used as a retort to suggestions that he speed up the processing of orders: None of my fellow countermen was as old as I, and during our infrequent breaks and slow periods I found myself matter-of-factly excluded from every impromptu practical joke or mind-fogging two-minute bull session. I knew nothing about Otis Redding, Camaros, or the fabled goings-on at Effie's place, and my acne-scarred colleagues did not give a damn about the Sepoy Mutiny in India or the British colonization of East Africa. Why should they? They were high school boys with more immediate ambitions.

By this time I was fully aware of the insidious pattern unifying my life, and I knew better than to register for fraternity rush. I thereby escaped blackballing at the hands of a pack of blazer-clad SAE's or Sigma Chi's. I had no family, no connections, and no money, and not a fraternity on campus

would have popped a single pop-top can of Pabst to sign me. To give the Greeks their due (though I never put them, or they me, to the ultimate test), I was not especially strong on personality, either.

But consider my background.

In graduate school, which I reached by dint of hard work and grudging recommendations from the necessary senior faculty members, I fell in love with a young woman named Melissa Ahmadjian. I loved her exotic name, her short fair hair, her strapping golden body, and her capriciously lively mind. Melissa reciprocated my interest if not my love. She drove a yellow Mustang (another product of the Ford Motor Company with a crucial role in my personal history), and on its cramped back seat, not far from a secluded undergraduate trysting place called Slippery Shoals, she indoctrinated me into the fibrillating rituals of sex.

By this time I had ceased walking hot dogs through the garden for my paychecks and made a respectable salary as a research assistant in the history department. The world looked bright. In spring quarter of that year, potentially solvent for the near-term future, I asked Melissa Ahmadjian to marry me. She did not say no.

She said, "I'll think about it, Jonathan."

Over the summer she meant.

**J**ust to keep Melissa stage-center a little longer, I could protract this part of my tale, but you have probably already concluded that she came back in the fall to decline my offer. However, you may not have anticipated her returning with another fiancé behind the wheel of her Mustang, yet that is exactly what she did. The interloper hailed from Melissa's hometown in Tennessee, and they were resuming a romance that by mutual consent they had broken off shortly after Melissa's senior year.

My rival was five inches taller than I and a hundred pounds heavier. Moreover, he owned stock in an aggressive New England company that did certain mysteriously merchandisable things with tritium, a radioactive isotope of hydrogen. He knew that I had proposed to Melissa, and he did not like me. Worse, he stayed in town living off his tritium dividends and comporting himself like a middle linebacker suckered into essaying the title role in a community-theatre production of *Hamlet*. I had no chance against him.

A year and a half after Me-

lissa married this boorish hulk, I found myself approaching the happy couple on the main interior concourse of the Georgia Coliseum during the basketball game against LSU. Melissa's husband spotted me, and the irresistible counterstreamings of the halftime crowd gave me no room to retreat or turn aside. "Open your coat," the lummo stage-whispered to my lost love. To her credit Melissa did not obey this gloating imperative. Besides, she did not have to part the wings of her navy blue London Fog for me to see that, as round and firm and fully packed as a Lucky Strike, she was radiantly pregnant.

Buckling down, I took two advanced degrees in history. But I began to job-hunt when college-level teaching positions in the humanities were as rare as snow leopards. How could you bag a beast that was nearly extinct? I am not the one to answer this question. I interviewed for positions in four different states, and no one hired me.

At last, completely demoralized, I gave up the search, betook myself to the small West Georgia city of Tocqueville, and went to work for Piedmont United Mills as an apprentice loom operator on the night shift. I was lucky to get this job, but it was not what I wanted to do,

and sometimes I could swear that my machine was spitefully chanting, "*Walk-her-through-the-garden, walk-her-through-the-garden. . .*" I had no friends at the mill, and I spent my afternoons, when I should have been sleeping, drifting through the corridors of the admin building of Tocqueville Junior College carrying the xeroxed transcripts of my grades from Athens.

I worked at Piedmont United Mills three and a half years before someone in the history department at the junior college had the ill luck and consummate kindness to die. (This was a young person who made the mistake of bicycling to class after an especially severe winter storm. The ice-weighted upper branches of a pecan tree cracked and plummeted at the exact moment of her passage, burying her and her ten-speed Gitane beneath a glittering demistrukture rather like a fallen chandelier. Every year on the anniversary of her death I place a rose on her modest marker in the Tocqueville cemetery.) I was hired on a contingency basis. If I did not work out, a hotshot Harvard grad would swoop down from Massachusetts to send me packing.

This threatened event did not occur, and I began to feel gingerly at ease in both the de-

partment and the classroom. True, the papers I wrote did not find their way into any of the requisite journals, and my many awkward approaches to undergraduate women whose eyes, during my lectures, seemed to be engaging mine in colloquies of ill-disguised desire finally led me to conclude that I was an eye-language illiterate. These women were not flirting; they were striving to appear intelligent and attentive. Maybe they *were* those things. When I invited them to films or pizza parlors, they invariably lifted their bright, bewitching eyes to confess that they already had boyfriends. That didn't stop Melissa Ahmadjian, I wanted to say—at least not at first. But this unspoken rejoinder only served to underscore the dismaying possibility that my Melissa had never had very good taste in men.

One goal kept me going, both as a professor and a would-be campus swain. Tenure would be mine if I stayed on the faculty for five consecutive years and won departmental approval. With tenure in my grasp I would surely begin to exude the ravishing pheromones of Eligible Bachelorhood.

However, my failure to publish a single definitive article on any historical topic arose to

haunt me. To exorcise this spectre, in the five months preceding the formal review of my credentials I cranked out a total of eight different papers on distinctive crucial episodes of imperial British history. My papers took turns limping home with form rejection slips until I at last placed a psychohistorical profile of the flamboyant explorer Richard Burton with *The East Alabama Review of Nineteenth-Century Approaches to Cartography*. (This was a little magazine in the most outrageously exacting sense. Each issue contained one medium-length article, a fold-out reproduction of a nineteenth-century map, and a page of subscription coupons.) Unfortunately, my piece was not scheduled to appear until the quarterly's fall issue, months after my tenure hearing, and I was going to have to hope that word of this pending publication, along with my far from negligible skills as a lecturer, would carry the day.

It did not. Just like a carny who has goaded some backwoods Nolan Ryan into hurling a softball at the metal bull's-eye triggering his (the carny's) plunge into a tub of icy water, I was dropped from my precarious perch. Denial of tenure meant dismissal.

The many unequivocal lessons of my past notwithstanding

ing, the shock of my dismissal overwhelmed and invaded me. Drowning, I did not go sweetly to my doom. I thrashed, I sputtered, I screamed for mercy. But censorious cold water closed over my head—the frigid amniotic fluids of failure—and I was flushed out of Tocqueville Junior College like a fetus so far along that its accusatory resemblance to a human being made even its executioners weep.

They did not spare me, though, and I spent three days naked and unshaven in my apartment staring at a jade plant whose small cushiony leaves—they reminded me of emeralds with pleurisy—took turns falling to the floor with sorrowful clicks. Perhaps out of a Freudian desire to compensate for others' niggardliness toward me, I compulsively overwatered my house plants. Now we had both drowned, my jade plant and I.

"Poor baby," I murmured as I sat there. "Poor baby."

Then I remembered that I had nearly seven grand in the Tocqueville Farmers, Merchants & Mill Workers Bank, and this recollection vanquished my doldrums. I would withdraw the money, pull up stakes, and light out for Alaska. Losers, loners, bankrupts, outcasts, drug addicts, and drunks

made one glorious Walt Whitmanish fraternity there (according to a recent segment on a television news magazine), and I would join it by landing in Juneau and buying a round for the house in the city's most visibly companionable bar. Yes, sir. That was the ticket. I must emigrate to the land of the timber wolf, the lucky strike, the pipeline, and the effervescent tritium-glow of the aurora borealis.

Completely ensorcelled by the siren song of the Klondike (an inaudible, spirit-stirring call of the wild), I shaved, dressed, ate, and drove into town to get my money.

I walked straight into a bank robbery. Three determined persons in ski masks, parkas, baggy pants, and jogging shoes were pointing stubby weapons—apparently illegal submachine guns assembled from mail-order parts—at the people lined up two and three deep at the tellers' windows. (Most of these people were almost certainly farmers, merchants, mill workers, or their spouses.) Grabbed by the elbow, I was spun into the line nearest the door and told in disconcertingly dulcet tones to behave myself.

As two of the holdup artists fanned out across the lobby, the

one who had just spoken to me pulled a set of unpleated gray draperies across the bank's interior plate-glass entrance. A fluorescent twilight enveloped the actors in our surreal little drama.

The robbers were women. Two of them began working the customer lines, collecting wallets, coin purses, jewelry. The eye-like bore of the machine gun trained on my midsection by the third woman held me immobile. Soon her cohorts were moving back and forth in the teller cages and passing zippered money pouches from hand to hand. No one spoke, time passed, and at last the wailing of police sirens sounded in the background like the cries of peacocks on a muggy summer's night. The robbers, conferring now in heated vernacularisms, decided they needed a hostage but wasted a good deal of precious time puzzling the matter out among themselves.

"Me!" I roared, surprising even myself. "I'd make an exemplary hostage!"

They took me. Out of all the people fixed in the quivering aspic of apprehension in the hijacked lobby of that bank, they selected me, Jonathan Smith, to see them to safety.

Finally resolute, the leader poked me with the barrel of her weapon, and the four of us es-

sayed a mincing retreat to the miniature rotunda housing the bank's drive-in window. Here, while the leader held the customers and bank officials at bay, the other two young women shed their outer garments, revealing rumpled Sears Catalogue floral-print dresses and the frowzy, flattened mops of their hair. With loot-packed purses they burst through the rotunda's outer door, all the while crying, "Don't shoot! Don't shoot!"—a pair of terrified hostages who had just escaped their captors. I, the real hostage, looked on in wonder and admiration.

The remaining young woman and I got out about five minutes later. Lady Pat,—for so I call the wily maiden who master-minded both the holdup and the getaway—put her head and shoulders up under the cape of my windbreaker and the barrel of her submachine gun right into the hollow at the base of my skull. In the parking lot outside the bank we undoubtedly bore an alarming resemblance to a pair of vaudeville performers in the ill-fitting halves of a horse costume. The police barricading the lot, brandishing their shotguns and bullhorns, froze and fell silent. They were effectively stymied by my many loud proclamations that the holdup man was a Vietnam vet-

eran in dire need of psychiatric help, a spiel I rattled off at Lady Pat's whispered promptings. When her two accomplices came squealing up in a commandeered police car to take us aboard and spirit us away, right under the noses of the beleaguered deputies and patrolmen, the rescue operation—our Great Escape, if you will—was a breathtaking *fait accompli*.

"Why aren't they following us?" I marveled as we shot through alleyways, down side-streets, over bumpy tractor trails, and eventually along a stretch of county-maintained asphalt west of Tocqueville.

"Dee Dee and I took the keys out of their ignitions," said Dee Dee's sister, Mary Faye, and everybody laughed.

Ten or twelve miles farther on, in a stand of loblolly pines, we transferred to a civilian vehicle put there for just that purpose—a cute little Escort, another product of the Ford Motor Company—and headed into a heartstopping Alabama sunset. Three poor-white former bank tellers with a grudge against the system, and their prematurely graying, far-from-reluctant hostage. Oh, what a sunset!

I have stayed with Lady Pat and the girls. They all took a shine to me. Such is their trust, I have helped them pull off a half-dozen subsequent heists.

Between times we hole up in Lady Pat's deceased parents' lakeside cottage in rural Alabama, a place you'll never find because I am lying about the lakeside. The house has a garden, unfortunately fallow nowadays, and every evening at sunset I walk my gun moll through it thinking of my bygone years.

Then we kiss, and I stop thinking altogether.

Poverty drives some people to crime, acquisitiveness others, and a desire for vengeance or a craving for the perils of mortal gamesmanship yet others. (Pick up any decent history book with a chapter on domestic law enforcement.) My motive, however, was something else entirely. I am going to marry Lady Pat, and one day it is conceivable that she and I, along with our cheerful henchwomen, will move to Alaska to escape the heat. Meanwhile, the number of people who want me—really, really *want me*—grows larger by the minute. . . .



MYSTERY CLASSIC

# The Ministering Angel

by E.C. Bentley



Illustration by Mark Fresh

“Whatever the meaning of it may be, it’s a devilish unpleasant business,” Arthur Selby said as he and Philip Trent established themselves on a sofa in the smoking room of the Lansdowne Club. “We see enough of that sort of business in the law—even firms like ours, that don’t have much to do with crime, have plenty of unpleasantness to deal with, and I don’t know that some of it isn’t worse than the general run of crime. You know what I mean. Crazy spite, that’s one thing. You wouldn’t believe what some people—people of position and education and all that—you wouldn’t believe what they are capable of when they want to do somebody a mischief. Usually it’s a blood relation. And then there’s constitutional viciousness. We had one client—he died soon after Snow took me into partnership—whose whole life had been one lascivious debauch.”

Trent laughed. “That phrase doesn’t sound like your own, Arthur. It belongs to an earlier generation.”

“Quite true,” Selby admitted. “It was Snow told me that about old Sir William Never-mind-who, and it stuck in my memory. But come now—I’m wandering. A good lunch—by the way, I hope it was a good lunch.”

“One of the very best,” Trent said. “You know it was, too. Ordering lunches is one of the best things you do, and you’re proud of it. That hock was a poem—a villanelle, for choice. What were you going to say about good lunches?”

“Why, I was going to say that a good lunch usually makes me inclined to prattle a bit; because, you see, all I allow myself most days is a couple of apples and a glass of milk in the office. That’s the way to appreciate a thing: don’t have it too often, and take a hell of a lot of trouble about it when you do. But that isn’t what I wanted to talk to you about, Phil. I was saying just now that we get a lot of unpleasantness in our job. We can usually understand it when we get it, but the affair I want to tell you about is a puzzle to me; and of course you are well known to be good at puzzles. If I tell you the story, will you give me a spot of advice if you can?”

“Of course.”

Well, it’s about a client of ours who died a fortnight ago, named Gregory Landell. You wouldn’t have heard of him, I dare say; he never did anything much outside his private hobbies, having always had money and never any desire to distinguish himself. He could have done, for he had plenty of brains—a brilliant scholar, always reading Greek. He and my partner had been friends from boyhood; at school and Cambridge together; had tastes in common;

both rock garden enthusiasts, for one thing. Landell's was a famous rock garden. Other amateurs used to come from all parts to visit it, and of course he loved that. Then they were both Lewis Carroll fans—when they got together, bits from the *Alice* books and the *Snark* were always coming into the conversation—both chess players, both keen cricketers when they were young enough, and never tired of watching first-class games. Snow used often to stay for weekends at Landell's place at Cholsey Wood, in Berkshire.

"When Landell was over fifty, he married for the first time. The lady was a Miss Mary Archer, daughter of a naval officer, and about twenty years younger than Landell, at a guess. He was infatuated with her, and she seemed to make a great fuss of him, though she didn't strike me as being the warm-hearted type. She was a goodlooking wench with plenty of style, and gave you the idea of being fond of her own way. We made his will for him, leaving everything to her if there were no children. Snow and I were both appointed executors. In his previous will he had left all his property to a nephew; and we were sorry the nephew wasn't mentioned in this later will, for he is a very useful citizen—some kind of medical research worker—and he has barely enough to live on."

"Why did he make both of you executors?" Trent wondered.

"Oh, in case anything happened to one of us. And it was just as well, because early this year poor old Snow managed to fracture his thigh, and he's been laid up ever since. But that's getting ahead of the story. After the marriage, Snow still went down to Landell's place from time to time, as before; but after a year or so he began to notice a great change in the couple. Landell seemed to get more and more under his wife's thumb. Couldn't call his soul his own."

Trent nodded. "After what you told me about the impression she made on you, that isn't surprising."

"No: Snow and I had been expecting it to happen. But the worst of it was, Landell didn't take it easily, as some husbands in that position do. He was obviously very unhappy, though he never said anything about it to Snow. She had quite given up pretending to be affectionate, or to consider him in any way, and Snow got the idea that Landell hated his wife like poison, though never daring to stand up to her. Yet he used to have plenty of character, too."

"I have seen the sort of thing," Trent said. "Unless a man is a bit of a brute himself, he can't bear to see the woman making an exhibition of herself. He'll stand anything rather than have her make a scene."

"Just so. Well, after a time Snow got no more invitations to go

there; and as you may suppose, he didn't mind that. It had got to be too uncomfortable, and though he was devilish sorry for Landell, he didn't see that he could do anything for him. For one thing, she wouldn't ever leave them alone together if she could possibly help it. If they were pottering about with the rock plants, or playing chess, or going for a walk, they always had her company."

Trent made a grimace. "Jolly for the visitor! And now, what was it you didn't understand?"

"I'll tell you. About a month ago a letter for Snow came to the office. I opened it—I was dealing with all his business correspondence. It was from Mrs. Landell, saying that her husband was ill and confined to bed; that he wished to settle some business affairs, and would be most grateful if Snow could find time to come down on the following day.

"Well, Snow couldn't, of course. I got the idea from this letter, naturally, that the matter was more or less urgent. It read as if Landell was right at the end of his tether. So I rang up Mrs. Landell, explained the situation, and said I would come myself that afternoon if it suited her. She said she would be delighted if I would; she was very anxious about her husband, whose heart was in a serious state. I mentioned the train I would come by, and she said their car would meet it.

"When I got there, she took me up to Landell's bedroom at once. He was looking very bad, and seemed to have hardly strength enough to speak. There was a nurse in the room: Mrs. Landell sent her out and stayed with us all the time I was there—which I had expected, after what I had heard from Snow. Then Landell began to talk, or whisper, about what he wanted done.

"It was a scheme for the rearrangement of his investments, and a shrewd one, too—he had a wonderful flair for that sort of thing, made a study of it. In fact"—Selby leant forward and tapped his friend's knee—"there was absolutely nothing for him to discuss with me. He knew exactly what he wanted done, and he needed no advice; he knew more about such matters than I did, or Snow either. Still, he made quite a show of asking my opinion of this detail and that, and all I could do was to look wise, and hum and haw, and then say that nothing could be better. Then he said that the exertion of writing a business letter was forbidden by his doctor, and would I oblige him by doing it for him? So I took down a letter of instructions to his brokers, which he signed; and his wife had the securities he was going to sell all ready in a long envelope; and that was that. The car took me to the station, and I got back in

time for dinner, after an absolutely wasted half day."

Trent had listened to all this with eager attention. "It was wasted, you say," he observed. "Do you mean he could have dictated such a letter to his wife, without troubling you at all?"

"To his wife, or to anybody who could write. And of course he knew that well enough. I tell you, all that business of consulting me was just camouflage. I knew it, and I could feel he knew I knew it. But what the devil it was intended to hide is beyond me. I don't think his wife suspected anything queer; Snow always said she was a fool about business matters. She listened intently to everything that was said, and seemed quite satisfied. His instructions were acted upon, and he signed the transfers; I know that, because when I came to making an inventory of the estate, after his death, I found it had all been done. Now then, Phil: what do you make of all that?"

Trent caressed his chin for a few moments. "You're quite sure that there *was* something unreal about the business? His wife, you say, saw nothing suspicious."

"Of course I'm sure. His wife evidently didn't know that he was cleverer about investments than either Snow or me, and that anyhow it wasn't our job. If he *had* wanted advice, he could have had his broker down."

Trent stretched his legs before him and carefully considered the end of his cigar. "No doubt you are right," he said at length. "And it does sound as if there was something unpleasant below the surface. For that matter, the surface itself was not particularly agreeable, as you describe it. Mrs. Landell, the ministering angel!" He rose to his feet. "I'll turn the thing over in my mind, Arthur, and let you know if anything strikes me."

Trent found the house in Cholsey Wood without much difficulty next morning. The place actually was a tract of woodland of large extent, cleared here and there for a few isolated modern houses and grounds, a row of cottages, an inn called the Magpie and Gate, and a Tudor manor house standing in a well-tended park. The Grove, the house of which he was in search, lay half a mile beyond the inn on the road that bisected the neighborhood. A short drive led up to it through the high hedge that bounded the property on this side, and Trent, turning his car into the opening, got out and walked to the house, admiring as he went the flower-bordered lawn on one side, the trim orchard on the other. The two-storied house, too, was a well-kept, well-built place, its porch overgrown by wis-



teria in full flower.

His ring was answered by a chubby maidservant, to whom he offered his card. He had been told, he said, that Mr. Landell allowed visitors who were interested in gardening to see his rock garden, of which Trent had heard so much. Would the maid take his card to Mr. Landell, and ask if it would be convenient—here he paused, as a lady stepped from an open door at the end of the hall. Trent described her to himself as a handsome, brassy blonde with a hard blue eye.

"I am Mrs. Landell," she said, as she took the card from the girl and glanced at it. "I heard what you were saying. I see, Mr. Trent, you have not heard of my bereavement. My dear husband passed away a fortnight ago." Trent began to murmur words of vague condolence and apology. "Oh no," she went on with a sad smile. "You must not think you are disturbing me. You must certainly see the rock garden now you are here. You have come a long way for the purpose, I dare say, and my husband would not have wished you to go away disappointed."

"It was a famous garden," Trent observed. "I heard of it from someone I think you know—Arthur Selby, the lawyer."

"Yes, he and his partner were my husband's solicitors," the lady said. "I will show you where the garden is, if you will come this way." She turned and went before him through the house, until they came out through a glass-panelled door into a much larger extent of grounds. "I cannot show it off to you myself," she went on, "I know absolutely nothing about that sort of gardening. My husband was very proud of it, and he was adding to the collection of plants up to the time he was taken ill last month. You see that grove of elms? The house is called after it. If you go along it you will come to a lily pond, and the rock garden is to the left of that. I fear I cannot entertain anyone just now, so I will leave you to yourself, and the parlormaid will wait to let you out when you have seen enough." She bowed her head in answer to his thanks, and retired into the house.

Trent passed down the avenue and found the object of his journey, a tall pile of roughly terraced grey rocks covered with a bewildering variety of plants rooted in the shallow soil provided for them. The lady of the house, he reflected, could hardly know less about rock gardens than himself, and it was just as well that there was to be no dangerous comparing of ignorances. He did not even know what he was looking for. He believed that the garden had something to tell, and that was all. Pacing slowly up and down, with searching

eye, before the stony rampart with its dress of delicate colors, he set himself to divine its secret.

Soon he noted a detail which, as he considered it, became more curious. Here and there among the multitude of plants there was one distinguished by a flat slip of white wood stuck in the soil among the stems, or just beside the growth. There were not many: searching about, he could find no more than seven. Written on each slip in a fair, round hand was a botanical name. Such names meant nothing to Trent; he could but wonder vaguely why they were there. Why were these plants thus distinguished? Possibly they were the latest acquisitions. Possibly Landell had so marked them to draw the attention of his old friend and fellow-enthusiast Snow. Landell had been expecting Snow to come and see him, Trent remembered. Snow had been unable to come, and Arthur Selby had come instead. Another point: the business Landell had wanted done was trifling; anyone could have attended to it. Why had it been so important to Landell that Snow should come?

Had Landell been expecting to have a private talk with Snow about some business matter? No: because on previous occasions, as on this occasion, Mrs. Landell had been present throughout the interview; it was evident, according to Selby, that she did not intend to leave her husband alone with his legal adviser at any time, and Landell must have realized that. Was this the main point: that the unfortunate Landell had been planning to communicate something to Snow by some means unknown to his wife?

Trent liked the look of this idea. It fitted into the picture, at least. More than that: it gave strong confirmation to the quite indefinite notion he had formed on hearing Selby's story; the notion that had brought him to Cholsey Wood that day. Snow was a keen amateur of rock gardening. If Snow had come to visit Landell, one thing virtually certain was that Snow would not have gone away without having a look at his friend's collection of rock plants, if only to see what additions might have been recently made. And such additions—so Mrs. Landell had just been saying—had been made. Mrs. Landell knew nothing about rock gardening; even if she had wasted a glance on this garden, she would have noticed nothing. Snow would have noticed instantly anything out of the way. And what was there out of the way?

Trent began to whistle faintly.

The wooden slips had now a very interesting look. With notebook and pencil he began to write down the names traced upon them. *Armeria Hallerii*. And *Arcana Nieuwillia*. And *Saponaria Galspi-*



*tosa*—good! And these delicate little blossoms, it appeared, rejoiced in the formidable name of *Acantholimon Glumaceum*. Then here was *Cartavacua Bellmannii*. Trent's mind began to run on the nonsense botany of Edward Lear: *Nastriecreechia Crawluppia* and the rest. This next one was *Veronica Incana*. And here was the last of the slips: *Ludovica Caroli*, quite a pretty name for a shapeless mass of grey-green vegetation that surely was commonly called in the vulgar tongue—

At this point Trent flung his notebook violently to the ground, and followed it with his hat. What a fool he had been! What a triple ass, not to have jumped to the thing at once! He picked up the book and hurriedly scanned the list of names. . . . Yes: it was all there.

Three minutes later he was in his car on the way back to town.

In his room at the offices of Messrs. Snow and Selby the junior partner welcomed Trent on the morning after his expedition to Chelsey Wood.

Selby pushed his cigarette box across the table. "Can you tell it to me in half an hour, do you think? I'd have been glad to come to lunch with you and hear it then, but this is a very full day, and I shan't get outside the office until seven, if then. What have you been doing?"

"Paying a visit to your late client's rock garden," Trent informed him. "It made a deep impression on me. Mrs. Landell was very kind about it."

Selby stared at him. "You always had the devil's own cheek," he observed. "How on earth did you manage that? And why?"

"I won't waste time over the how," Trent said. "As to the why, it was because it seemed to me, when I thought it over, that that garden might have a serious meaning underlying all its gaiety. And I thought so all the more when I found that Mary, Mary, quite contrary, hadn't a notion how her garden grew. You see, it was your partner whom Landell had wanted to consult about those investments of his; and it was hardly likely that your rock gardening partner, once on the spot, would have missed the chance of feasting his eyes on his friend's collection of curiosities. So I went and feasted mine; and I found what I expected."

"The deuce you did!" Selby exclaimed. "And what was it?"

"Seven plants—only seven out of all the lot—marked with their botanical names, clearly written on slips of wood, à la Kew Gardens. I won't trouble you with four of the names—they were put there just to make it look more natural, I suppose; they were genuine

names; I've looked them up. But you will find the other three interesting—choice Latin, picked phrase, if not exactly Tully's every word."

Trent, as he said this, produced a card and handed it to his friend, who studied the words written upon it with a look of complete incomprehension.

"*Arcana Nieuwillia*," he read aloud. "I can't say that thrills me to the core, anyhow. What's an *Arcana*? Of course, I know no more about botany than a cow. It looks as if it was named after some Dutchman."

"Well, try the next," Trent advised him.

"*Cartavacua Bellmannii*. No, that too fails to move me. Then what about the rest of the nosegay? *Ludovica Caroli*. No, it's no good, Phil. What *is* it all about?"

Trent pointed to the last name. "That one was what gave it away to m<sup>e</sup>. The slip with *Ludovica Caroli* on it was stuck into a clump of saxifrage. I know saxifrage when I see it; and I seemed to remember that the right scientific name for it was practically the same—*Saxifraga*. And then I suddenly remembered another thing: that Ludovicus is the Latin form of the name Louis, which some people choose to spell L-E-W-I-S."

"What!" Selby jumped to his feet. "Lewis—and Caroli! Lewis Carroll! Oh Lord! The man whose books Snow and Landell both knew by heart. Then it *is* a cryptogram." He referred eagerly to the card. "Well then—*Cartavacua Bellmannii*. Hm! Would that be the Bellman in *The Hunting of the Snark*? And *Cartavacua*?"

"Translate it," Trent suggested.

Selby frowned. "Let's see. In law, *carta* used to be a charter. and *vacua* means empty. The Bellman's empty charter—"

"Or chart. Don't you remember?"

'He had bought a large map representing the sea,  
Without the least vestige of land:  
And the crew were much pleased when they found it to be  
A map they could all understand.'

And in the poem, one of the pages is devoted to the Bellman's empty map."

"Oh! And that tells us—?"

"Why, I believe it tells us to refer to Landell's own copy of the book and to that blank page."

"Yes, but what for?"

"*Arcana Nieuwillia*, I expect."

"I told you I don't know what *Arcana* means. It isn't law Latin, and I've forgotten most of the other kind."

"This isn't law Latin, as you say. It's the real thing, and it means 'hidden,' Arthur, 'hidden.'"

"Hidden what?" Selby stared at the card again; then suddenly dropped into this chair and turned a pale face to his friend. "My God, Phil! So that's it!"

"It can't be anything else, can it?"

Selby turned to his desk telephone and spoke into the receiver. "I am not to be disturbed on any account till I ring." He turned again to Trent. . . .

"I asked Mr. Trent to drive me down," Selby explained, "because I wanted his help in a matter concerning your husband's estate. He has met you before informally, he tells me."

Mrs. Landell smiled at Trent graciously. "Only the other day he called to see the rock garden. He mentioned that he was a friend of yours."

She had received them in the morning room at the Grove, and Trent, who on the occasion of his earlier visit had seen nothing but the hallway running from front to back, was confirmed in his impression that strict discipline ruled in that household. The room was orderly and speckless, the few pictures hung mathematically level, the flowers in a bowl on the table were fresh and well displayed.

"And what is the business that brings you and Mr. Trent down so unexpectedly?" Mrs. Landell inquired. "Is it some new point about the valuation of the property, perhaps?" She looked from one to the other of them with round blue eyes.

Selby looked at her with an expression that was new in Trent's experience of that genial, rather sybaritic man of law. He was now serious, cool, and hard.

"No, Mrs. Landell; nothing to do with that," Selby said. "I am sorry to tell you I have reason to believe that your husband made another will not long ago, and that it is in this house. If there is such a will, and if it is in order legally, it will of course supersede the will made shortly after your marriage."

Mrs. Landell's first emotion on hearing this statement was to be seen in a look of obviously genuine amazement. Her eyes and mouth opened together, and her hands fell on the arms of her chair. The feeling that succeeded, which she did her best to control, was as

plainly one of anger and incredulity.

"I don't believe a word of it," she said sharply. "It is quite impossible. My husband certainly did not see his solicitor, or any other lawyer, for a long time before his death. When he did see Mr. Snow, I was always present. If he made another will, I must have known about it. The idea is absurd. Why should he have wanted to make another will?"

Selby shrugged. "That I cannot say, Mrs. Landell. The question does not arise. But if he had wanted to, he could make a will without a lawyer's assistance, and if it complied with the requirements of the law it would be a valid will. The position is that, as his legal adviser and executor of the will of which we know, I am bound to satisfy myself that there is no later will, if I have grounds for thinking that there is one. And I have grounds for thinking so."

Mrs. Landell made a derisive sound. "Have you really? And grounds for thinking it is in this house, too? Well, I can tell you that it isn't. I have been through every single paper in this place, I have looked carefully everywhere, and there is no such thing."

"There was nothing locked up then?" Selby suggested.

"Of course not," Mrs. Landell snapped. "My husband had no secrets from me."

Selby coughed. "It may be so. All the same, Mrs. Landell, I shall have to satisfy myself on the point. The law is very strict about matters of this kind, and I must make a search on my own account."

"And suppose I say I will not allow it? This is all my property now, and I am not obliged to let anyone come rummaging about for something that isn't there."

Again Selby coughed. "That is not exactly the position, Mrs. Landell. When a person dies, having made a will appointing an executor, his property vests at once in that executor, and it remains entirely in his control until the estate has been distributed as the will directs. The will on which you are relying, and which is the only one at present positively known to exist, appointed my partner and myself executors. We must act in that capacity, unless and until a later will comes to light. I hope that is quite clear."

This information appeared, as Selby put it later, to take the wind completely out of Mrs. Landell's sails. She sat in frowning silence, mastering her feelings, for a few moments, then rose to her feet.

"Very well," she said. "If what you tell me is correct, it seems you can do as you like, and I cannot prevent you wasting your time. Where will you begin your search?"

"I think," Selby said, "the best place to make a start would be the room where he spent most of his time when by himself. There is such a room, I suppose?"

She went to the door. "I will show you the study," she said, not looking at either of them. "Your friend had better come, too, as you say you want him to assist you."

She led the way across the hall to another room, with a french window opening on the lawn behind the house. Before this stood a large writing table, old-fashioned and solid like the rest of the furniture, which included three bookcases of bird's-eye maple. Not wasting time, Selby and Trent went each to one of the bookcases, while Mrs. Landell looked on implacably from the doorway.

"*Annales Thucydidei et Xenophontei*," read Selby in an undertone, glancing up and down the shelves. "*Miscellanea Critica*, by Cobet—give me the *Rural Rides*, for choice. I say, Phil, I seem to have come to the wrong shop. *Palaographia Graeca*, by Montfaucon—I had an idea that was a place where they used to break chaps on the wheel in Paris. Greek plays—rows and rows of them. How are you getting on?"

"I am on the trail, I believe," Trent answered. "This is all English poetry—but not arranged in any order. Aha! What do I see?" He pulled out a thin red volume. "One of the best-looking books that was ever printed and bound." He was turning the pages rapidly. "Here we are—The Ocean Chart. But no longer 'a perfect and absolute blank.'"

He handed the book to Selby, who scanned attentively the page at which it was opened. "Beautiful writing, isn't it?" he remarked. "Not much larger than smallish print, and quite as legible. Hm! Hm!" He frowned over the minute script, nodding approval from time to time; then looked up. "Yes, this is all right. Everything clear, and the attestation clause quite in order—that's what gets 'em, very often."

Mrs. Landell, whose existence Selby appeared to have forgotten for the moment, now spoke in a strangled voice. "Do you mean to tell me that there is a will written in that book?"

"I beg your pardon," the lawyer said with studied politeness. "Yes, Mrs. Landell, this is the will for which I was looking. It is very brief, but quite clearly expressed, and properly executed and witnessed. The witnesses are Mabel Catherine Wheeler and Ida Florence Kirkby, both domestic servants, resident in this house."

"They dared to do that behind my back!" Mrs. Landell raged. "It's a conspiracy!"

Selby shook his head. "There is no question here of an agreement to carry out some hurtful purpose," he said. "The witnesses appear to have signed their names at the request of their employer, and they were under no obligation to mention the matter to any other person. Possibly he requested them not to do so; it makes no difference. As for the provisions of the will, it begins by bequeathing the sum of ten thousand pounds, free of legacy duty, to yourself—"

"What!" screamed Mrs. Landell.

"Ten thousand pounds, free of legacy duty," Selby repeated calmly. "It gives fifty pounds each to my partner and myself, in consideration of our acting as executors—that, you may remember, was provided by the previous will. And all the rest of the testator's property goes to his nephew, Robert Spencer Landell, of 27 Longland Road, Blackheath, in the county of Kent."

The last vestige of self-control departed from Mrs. Landell as the words were spoken. Choking with fury and trembling violently, she snatched the book from Selby's hand, ripped out the inscribed page, and tore it across again and again. "Now what are you going to do?" she gasped.

"The question is, what are you going to do," Selby returned with perfect coolness. "If you destroy that will beyond repair, you commit a felony which is punishable by penal servitude. Besides that, the will could still be proved; I am acquainted with its contents, and can swear to them. The witnesses can swear that it was executed. Mr. Trent and I can swear to what has just taken place. If you will take my advice, Mrs. Landell, you will give me back those bits of paper. If they can be pieced together into a legible document, the court will not refuse to recognize it, and I may be able to save you from being prosecuted—I shall do my best. And there is another thing. As matters stand now, I must ask you to consider your arrangements for the future. There is no hurry, naturally; I shall not press you in any way; but you realize that while you continue living here you do so on sufferance, and that the place must be taken over by Mr. Robert Landell in due course."

Mrs. Landell was sobered at last. Very pale, and staring fixedly at Selby, she flung the pieces of the will on the writing table and walked rapidly from the room.

"I had no idea you could be such a brute, Arthur," Trent remarked as he drove the car Londonwards through the Berkshire levels.

Selby said nothing.

"The accused made no reply," Trent observed. "Perhaps you didn't notice that you were being brutal, with those icy little legal

lectures of yours, and your drawing out the agony in that study until you had her almost at screaming point even before the blow fell."

Selby glanced at him. "Yes, I noticed all that. I don't think I am a vindictive man, Phil, but she made me see red. In spite of what she said, it's clear to me that she suspected he might have made another will at some time. She looked for it high and low. If she had found it she would undoubtedly have suppressed it. And her husband had no secrets from her! And whenever Snow was there she was always present! Can you imagine what it was like being dominated and bullied by a harpy like that?"

"Ghastly," Trent agreed. "But look here, Arthur; if he could get the two maids to witness the will, and keep quiet about it, why couldn't he have made it on an ordinary sheet of paper and enclosed it in a letter to your firm, and got either Mabel Catherine or Ida Florence to post it secretly?"

Selby shook his head. "I thought of that. Probably he didn't dare take the risk of the girl being caught with the letter by her mistress. If that had happened, the fat *would* have been in the fire. Besides, we should have acknowledged the letter, and she would have opened our reply and read it. Reading all his correspondence would have been part of the treatment, you may be sure. No, Phil: I liked old Landell, and I meant to hurt. Sorry; but there it is."

"I wasn't objecting to your being brutal," Trent said. "I felt just like you, and you had my unstinted moral support all the time. I particularly liked that passage when you reminded her that she could be slung out on her ear whenever you chose."

"She's devilish lucky, really," Selby said. "She can live fairly comfortably on the income from her legacy if she likes. And she can marry again, God help us all! Landell got back on her in the end; but he did it like a gentleman."

"So did you," Trent said. "A very nice little job of torturing, I should call it."

Selby's smile was bitter. "It only lasted minutes," he said. "Not years."

### SOLUTION TO THE NOVEMBER "UNSOLVED":

Charlie killed Edwin.



# CLASSIFIED MARKET PLACE

**ALFRED HITCHCOCK** — published 13 times a year. **CLASSIFIED AD** rate is \$1.25 per word — payable in advance — (\$25.00 minimum.) Capitalized words 40¢ per word additional. To be included in the next issue please send order and remittance to R. S. Wayner, Classified Ad Director, **DAVIS PUBLICATIONS, INC.**, 380 Lexington Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.

## ADDITIONAL INCOME

**MECHANICALLY INCLINED INDIVIDUALS** Assemble electronic devices in your home. Knowledge or experience not necessary. Get started in spare time. Turn your spare or full time into cash. No investment—Write for free details. **ELECTRONIC DEVELOPMENT LAB**, Box 1560AH, Pinellas Park, FL 33565.

**HONESTLY**, we do buy your good amateur poetry. Not a ripoff. Guthrie Journal, (405) 282-1981. We pay up to \$100.

## AGENTS WANTED

**FROM YOUR HOME** sell books by mail. Substantial profits, no experience. Details \$1.00. **RWH Enterprise**, 2 Grand View Drive, Smithfield, RI 02917.

**UNEMPLOYED? UNDER PAID? TIRED OF PRESENT EMPLOYMENT?** Try this! **EXCITING INCOME**, My company seeking sales agents. Ideal Home business opportunity. No experience needed! Start immediately. An exciting future awaits you! \$1.00 full details. **Five Lakes Enterprises**, 6626 18th Avenue 3NA, Kenosha, Wisconsin 53140.

## AUTHOR'S SERVICE

**LOOKING** for a publisher? Learn how you can have your book published, promoted, distributed. Send for free booklet, **HP-5**, Vantage Press, 516 W. 34th St., New York, NY 10001.

**WRITERS**. Literary Services. Reasonable. Professional. Information for **SASE**. "Writing For Publication" booklet \$5. Creative Associates, 1911 N. Higley Rd., Mesa, AZ 85205.

## AVIATION

**ANTIGRAVITY PROPULSION DEVICE!** Free Brochure. **RDA**, Box 873, Concord, NC 28025.

## BIORHYTHMS

**BIORHYTHMS** and Critical Day Lists. Compatibility assessments free with 2+ charts. Send birthdays and \$3.50/year/chart to: **Black Swan**, Box 5200, Loveland, Colorado 80537.

## BOOKS & PERIODICALS

**FREE CATALOGUES**, hardbacks, paperbacks. Search Service. Detective Mystery Booksearch, Box 15460, Orlando, Florida, 32808.

**WORLD'S** largest mystery specialist (30,000 volumes). No obligation search service. Send \$2 for next 4 catalogues. **Aardvarks Book Detectives**, P. O. Box 15070, Orlando, FL 32858.

**FREE List!** Used hardcover mystery and detective fiction. Over 7500 books listed yearly. **Dunn's Mysteries**, 251 Baldwin Ave., Meriden, CT 06450.

60,000 Science Fiction and Mystery paperbacks, Hardcover, Magazines. Free catalogs! **Grant Thiessen**, Box Z-86A, Neche, ND 58265-0133.

**PHONECIUS' FABLES**. 50 Short Stories. **RIBALD. ROMANTIC. IMAGINATIVE**. Surprise endings. Fine Christmas gift. Hardcover \$11. postpaid. **Ann Arbor Book**, Box 8064, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107.

**PERFECT** Christmas gift for mystery fans. **MISTLETOE MALICE** by Al Menendez, a guide to Christmas murder mysteries. Only \$4.95 plus .50 postage. **Holly Tree Press**. P.O. Box 7002 Silver Spring, MD 20907.

**PUBLISH YOUR BOOK!** Join our successful authors. Publicity, advertising, beautiful books. All subjects invited. Send for fact-filled booklet and free manuscript report. **Carlton Press**, Dept. SMK, 84 Fifth Avenue, New York 10011.

**UNIQUE Book:** How To Get Out Of Debt Fast. 10 day money back guarantee. Send \$6.95 to **T. Kinser**, P.O. Box 65915, West Des Moines, Iowa 50265.

**SELLING** Comic Books, Pulp, Shadow, Doc Savage, Paperbacks, Hardcover Books, Playboys, Movie Material, Movie and Science Fiction Magazines, TV Guides, James Bond, McGoonan, Monroe, Diana Rigg, Gum Cards, Art, Etc. Catalogs \$.95. **Rogofsky**, Box 107, Glen Oaks, NY 11004.

# Classified Continued

## BOOKS & PERIODICALS—Cont'd

"CLIENT'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER." Tax, money saving, investment and personal development advice. The 16 page September issue is available for \$2.00. Al V. Barr, Public Accountant, Box 26517, Dept. C, Denver, Colorado 80226.

READ "How to Write a Classified Ad That Pulls." Instructive booklet tells how. Also includes certificate worth \$2.00 toward a classified ad in any of our publications. For your copy send \$1.75 (includes postage) to R. S. Wayner, Davis Publications, Inc., 380 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10017.

## BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

STAY HOME! MAKE MONEY ADDRESS-ING ENVELOPES. VALUABLE GENUINE OFFER. 20¢. Write Lindco, 3636-DA Peterson Ave., Chicago, IL 60659.

GOOD MONEY! Weekly! Processing Mail! Free Supplies, Postage! Information? Rush stamped envelope! Foodmaster-DC3, Burnt Hills, NY 12027.

FREE BOOK — "2042 Unique, Proven Enterprises." Fabulous "Little Knowns." How tiny projects made big money! Work home! Haylings-OP, Carlsbad, CA 92008.

BIG PROFIT HOME BUSINESS bronzing and chinakoting baby shoes. Cost \$1.00 pair; Sells \$19.95, up. NBSDG, 398 Airport, Sebring, FL 33870.

RUBBER Stamp outfits as low as \$400.00. Payment plans available. Complete details write: Custom, 2914 W. Sexton, Springfield, MO 65807.

WHY not to invest in Solar Energy. This booklet by famous solar designer can save you thousands. \$8.00. Solar Facts, Dept. 1A, Box 21193, Denver, CO 80221-0193.

EARN Money Mailing School Bulletins. Free Postage! Supplies! For samples, enclose stamped addressed (long) envelope. Community Services, B9-CC, Orangeburg, NY 10962.

TAKE PICTURES for profit. Good spare-time income. Free report tells how. Write: Camera Ventures, 14589H West 32nd, Golden, CO 80401.

MAILORDER OPPORTUNITY! Start profitable home business without experience or capital. Information free. Gil Turk, Dept. 87, Montvale, NJ 07645.

## BUY IT WHOLESALE

400,000 BARGAINS Below Wholesale! Many Free! Liquidations . . . Closeouts . . . Job Lots . . . Single Samples! Free Details. Worldwide Bargainhunters, Box 730-10, Holland, MI 49423.

UNLIMITED income selling quality costume jewelry. Catalog \$1.00 (refundable). Free Opal ring with first order. International Wholesalers, Box 7133-10, Riverside, California 92513.

## EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

WHY NOT GET THAT INTERVIEW! DON'T YOU DESERVE A GOOD JOB TOO? A seven chapter book containing a proven plan on how to open those all important interview doors. 30 day MONEY BACK GUARANTEE. Send \$10.00 to Glowing Light Publications, P.O. Box 1865, Dept. COM-01, Sea-side, CA 93955.

## FARMES, ACREAGE & REAL ESTATE

VACATION RETREATS. Info on Ontario public land \$5. Scope Enterprises, Box 607 Adelaide P.O., Toronto, Ontario M5C 2J8.

## FILM & TV SCRIPTS

WRITERS AND COLLECTORS. Over 700 movie and television shooting scripts! Hitchcock to Spielberg. Send \$1.00 for Catalog. Scriptfinders, 1626 N. Wilcox, Hollywood, CA 90028. Suite #348.

## GIFTS THAT PLEASE

AMAZING! Christmas catalog! Over 2,500 items!! Send \$2.50 refundable on first order. Gifts Unlimited, MC12, 808 Sunset, El Paso, TX 79922.

ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE, published monthly. Send \$17.50 for 13 issues to Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine, P.O. Box 1930, Marion, OH 43305.

## GOVERNMENT SURPLUS

"GOVERNMENT - SURPLUS" JEEPS \$30.00! 800,000 Items! Complete Information Your Area. Largest OFFICIAL Directory. \$3.00 (Guaranteed). SURPLUS (A270), 4620 Wisconsin Northwest, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20016.

ARMY Surplus. Many Items. Pants \$1.00; Shirts \$1.00; Shoes \$5.00; Boots \$8.00; Catalog \$4.00. Refund on First Order. Lawton Surplus, P.O. Box 764, Lawton, OK 73501.

# Classified Continued

## HOBBIES & COLLECTIONS

**GREAT RADIO PROGRAMS**—mystery, adventure, science-fiction. Free list cassettes. Rare Radio, Box 117, Sunland, CA 91040.

## HYPNOTISM

**FREE Catalog.** Hypnotism, Hypnotic cassettes, sleep learning. Become the person you truly want to be. DLMH, Box 487, Anaheim, CA 92805.

## IMPORT-EXPORT

**MARKET 2500** "Amazing" New Fast-Sellers Without Risk. Giftwares, Decorative Accessories, Household Furnishings. Free Brochures! Ballrightco, Box 91304-N12, Cleveland, Ohio 44101.

## JEWELRY

**CLOSEOUT JEWELRY.** 55¢ Dozen. 25¢ gets catalog. ROUSSELS, 107-310 Dow, Arlington, MA 02174.

## LOANS BY MAIL

**BORROW \$30,000** without interest! All eligible. Repay anytime. Free details. Infohouse, Box 1004-AH12, New York, NY 10003.

**BORROW By Mail!** Signature Loans, No Collateral! Many more unique services available. Write! Free Details! MBG-DPC1282, Box 2298, Sandusky, OH 44870.

**MONEY PROBLEMS?** Write us. Immediate Loans and Outright Grants to individuals refused elsewhere. 98% eligible! Associates, Box 98-D2, Brooklyn, NY 11235.

**BORROW \$25,000 "OVERNIGHT".** Any purpose. Keep indefinitely! Free Report reveals little-known sources/techniques! Success Research, Box 19739-SZ, Indianapolis, IN 46219.

**VISA/Mastercard by Mail!** Obtain one through us not just information, but a service. Write! Credit-DPC1282, Box 2298, Sandusky, OH 44870.

**\$LOANS\$ ON SIGNATURE TO \$100,000!** Any purpose. Write: ELITE, Box 454-DG, Lynbrook, New York 11563.

**BORROW \$25,000 OVERNIGHT.** From Home. Free Report. Bond, Box 1674B, Merritt Island, FL 32952.

## MAILING LISTS

**PLEASE** Be sure to include your zip code when ordering merchandise from classified advertisements. You'll receive faster delivery.

## MEMORY IMPROVEMENT

**INSTANT MEMORY . . . NEW WAY TO REMEMBER.** No memorization. Release your **PHOTOGRAPHIC** memory. Stop forgetting! **FREE** information. Institute of Advanced Thinking, 845DP, ViaLapaz, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272.

## MISCELLANEOUS

**OLDTIME** radio programs. Suspense drama, science fiction; comedies. Highly enjoyable tapes. Free catalogue. Carl D. Froelich, Route One, New Freedom, Pennsylvania 17349.

**COLLEGE STUDENTS!** - Improve your grades - Termpaper catalog - 306 pages - 10,278 topics - Rush \$1.00 - Research, Box 25097P, Los Angeles, CA 90025. (213) 477-8226.

**"HOW To Survive Without A Salary."** Cope in today's inflationary times by learning how to live the Conservser Lifestyle. 232 page book. \$10.95. More details 25¢. Eden Press, 11623 Slater, Box 8410-DS, Fountain Valley, CA 92708.

**DON'T DEAL STUD!** Shrewd Dealers Choice Poker is a unique book, comprised after forty years of trial and error and begins where other poker books end! Supported by facts and logic. Includes tips on how to choose the best seat; exploit other players habits. Secretly sabotage a disliked player, etc. Great gift for friends and servicemen. -30- day money-back guarantee. \$5.00 ppd, tax included. Granada Press, 17537 Chatsworth St. #119, Granada Hills, CA 91344.

**SWEEPSTAKES WINNING WAYS.** Make your winning dreams come true. \$3.95. Tuomy Enterprises, Dept. HA, Box 4840, Framingham, MA 01701.

## MONEYMAKING OPPORTUNITIES

**MAKE YOUR CLASSIFIED AD PAY.** Get "How to Write A Classified Ad That Pulls." Includes certificate worth \$2.00 towards a classified ad in this publication. Send \$1.75 (includes postage) to R. S. Wayne, Davis Publications, Inc., Dept. CL, 380 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10017.

**CLOSEOUT JEWELRY.** 55¢ dozen. (Catalog 25¢). ROUSSELS, 107-911 Dow, Arlington, MA 02174.

**\$1000 WEEKLY POSSIBLE** Mailing Envelopes! Easy Guaranteed Program! Free Details: Majestic, Box 415-DM, Lewiston, NY 14092.

# ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S

mystery magazine

**CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING  
ORDER FORM**

Sent to **ALFRED HITCHCOCK MAGAZINE**  
Classified Advertising Department/Suite 1401  
380 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017

(PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE)

YOUR NAME \_\_\_\_\_

FIRM (NAME IN AD) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed for \_\_\_\_\_

insertion(s) in the \_\_\_\_\_

issue(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Heading \_\_\_\_\_

(FOR ADDITIONAL WORDS ATTACH SEPARATE SHEET)

(1) \$25.00	(2) \$25.00	(3) \$25.00	(4) \$25.00	(5) \$25.00
(6) \$25.00	(7) \$25.00	(8) \$25.00	(9) \$25.00	(10) \$25.00
(11) \$25.00	(12) \$25.00	(13) \$25.00	(14) \$25.00	(15) \$25.00
(16) \$25.00	(17) \$25.00	(18) \$25.00	(19) \$25.00	(20) \$25.00
(21) \$26.25	(22) \$27.50	(23) \$28.75	(24) \$30.00	(25) \$31.25
(26) \$32.50	(27) \$33.75	(28) \$35.00	(29) \$36.25	(30) \$37.50

**HOW TO COUNT WORDS:** Name and address must be included in counting the number of words in your ad. Each initial or number counts as 1 word; Mark, Holly, 380 Lexington Avenue, New York, New York 10017; 7 WORDS. Zippers are not counted. Phone # 2 WORDS. Symbols used as keys are charged for. City of State count as 1 word each; Garden City, New York; 2 words. Abbreviations such as C.O.D., F.O.B., P.O., U.S.A., 7/10, 35mm count as 1 word; (P.O. Box 145 counts as 3 words. Webster's International Unabridged Dictionary will be used as our authority for spelling, compound words, hyphens, abbreviations, etc. Please make checks payable to **ALFRED HITCHCOCK MAGAZINE**.

**DEADLINE:** Copy and payment must be in by the 5th day of the third preceding month for issue in which ad is to appear.

**20 WORD MINIMUM**  
Only \$25.00 for 20 Words or Less  
\$1.25 each additional word  
Capitalized words add—40¢ per word  
**SAVE 15% WITH 3 CONSECUTIVE MONTHS**  
**SAME COPY ORDER**

Words at \$1.25 each \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Capitalized word at 40¢ each \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total amount for 1 ad \$ \_\_\_\_\_

15% Savings with 3 Consecutive Months Discount

(a) Multiply one ad total \$ \_\_\_\_\_ x 3 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(b) Multiply total amount on above line by \_\_\_\_\_ x .85

(c) Total amount for 3 ads \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(Example: One 20 word ad \$25.00 x 3 months = \$75.00 x .85 = \$63.75)

# Classified Continued

## MONEYMAKING OPPORTUNITIES—Cont'd

BECOME independently wealthy - Millionaire's secrets to wealth for the 80's. Free details. Mason Book Company, 2427 So. Beverly Dr., L.A., CA 90034.

\$60.00 per Hundred securing-stuffing envelopes from home. Offer-details: Rush stamped self-addressed envelope. Imperial, P-460, X17410, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33318.

400% profit three-five years! Proven "safe" investment! Minimum capital-up! Details: Sase, John Plumb, 1634-C3, South 19th Street, Sheboygan, Wis. 53081.

SELL Books by Mail! Big Profits! Learn what the mailorder business is about. Write Now! MPG-DPCI282, Box 2133, Sandusky, OH 44870.

\$500 + WEEKLY at home in spare time: Easy, guaranteed. Start immediately! Free details. Darby & Sons, POB 6946-D, Chicago, IL 60680-6946. Postcards preferred.

EXTRA INCOME! \$500+ weekly at home in spare time: easy, guaranteed. Free details. Darby & Sons, POB 6946-D, Chicago 60680.

BECOMING A MILLIONAIRE has just become a whole lot easier. Let me show you how! I succeed where others fail. Mary's Success In Prosperity, P.O. Box 3095, Providence, R.I. 02907.

## OF INTEREST TO WOMEN

OVERWEIGHT? Heartburn? Ulcers? Other problems? A safe, natural, inexpensive product available locally. Guaranteed report. \$2.00: A&A Publications, POB 1252, W. Chester, PA 19380.

## PERSONAL

SCANDINAVIAN Ladies, 18-68, sincere, seek correspondence, friendship, marriage. Details: Scannaclub, Dept. CO3, POB 4, Pittsford, NY 14534. (Please enclose stamp).

SINGLE? Widowed? Divorced, Nationwide introduction! Hundreds of sincere members! All Ages! Free information! Write: Identity, Box 315-DT, Royal Oak, Michigan 48068.

GIVE A GIFT that will be appreciated — ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE, published monthly. Send \$17.50 for 13 issues to P.O. Box 1930, Marion, OH 43305.

## PERSONAL—Cont'd

SINGLE? Meet that special person—anywhere! Very low fees. DATELINE, 316 Fifth Ave., New York 10001, (212) 889-3230 or (312) 523-2100 or (213) 854-0640.

DEFEND Yourself. Defender spray stops attackers instantly. It could save your life — Send \$3.50: Dann Products, Box 465, Riverdale, N.Y. 10471.

PRIVATE Address, for your Personal Correspondence. Confidential Services. Professional Mail Forwarding, Box 561-H, Milton, MA 02186.

## PHOTOGRAPHY-PHOTO FINISHING

SAVE HUNDREDS OF DOLLARS!!!! Make your own S & M Densitometer. Send \$5.00 for successful photography in your darkroom. Order direct: S & M Instruments. Dept. A.H.12, 380 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10017.

## RADIO & TELEVISION

CABLE TV DESCRAMBLERS and CONVERTERS. PLANS and PARTS. Build or Buy. For information send \$2.00. C&D Electronics, P.O. Box 21, Jenison, MI 49428.

## RECORDS, TAPES & SOUND EQUIPMENT

FREE Promotional albums, concert tickets, stereos, etc. Information: Barry Publications, 477 82nd Street, Brooklyn, New York 11209.

## SONGWRITERS

POEMS WANTED. Songs recorded and published. Radio-TV promotions. Broadway Music Productions, Box 7438-DA, Sarasota, FL 33578.

SONGWRITERS: Exciting offer! Poems, songs needed. Free evaluation. Creative Music Productions, Box 1943-A12, Houston, TX 77001.

SONGWRITERS. The Guild was organized 28 years ago to help writers produce good songs and sell them. National Songwriters Guild, 2421 Walnut Rd., Pontiac, MI 48057.

## SPECIAL SERVICES

MAIL FORWARDED 5 days a week or will hold for instructions. Itineraries followed. Message Service. Mbr: Chamber of Commerce. MCCA, Inc., Box 2870, Estes Park, Colorado 80517. (800) 525-5304.

## UNUSUAL BOOKS

THE INTELLIGENCE LIBRARY: Many unique books & official manuals on RESTRICTED subjects — Bugging, Wiretapping, Locksmithing, Covert Investigation, & MUCH MORE. Free brochures, MENTOR, DP, 135-53 No. Blvd., Flushing, N.Y. 11354.

# GET AWAY WITH MURDER.

GET \$118.40 WORTH OF MACDONALD, CHARTERIS, JOHNSTON  
AND 9 OTHER GREAT WRITERS FOR \$1.

**A**s a new member of The Detective Book Club, you'll make your first big killing on our introductory offer: 12 of the best recently-published mysteries for \$1.

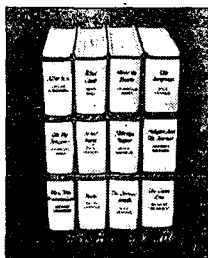
You'll savor baffling murder cases, international intrigue, innocent people caught in a web of evil, terror touched by the supernatural. All served up with the intricate plotting, bizarre twists and gripping action that are the hallmarks of the great modern masters.

Bought in a bookstore, they'd cost \$118.40. But as a new member of The Detective Book Club, you get all 12 tales shown on the left for only \$1... in four handsome, hardbound, triple-volumes.

As a member, you'll get the Club's free monthly Preview, which describes in advance each month's selections. They're chosen by the Club's editors, who select the best from more than 400 mysteries published each year. You may reject any volume before or after receiving it, within 21 days; there's no minimum number of books you must buy. And you may cancel your membership at any time.

When you accept a club selection, you get three complete, full-length detective novels in one hardcover triple-volume like the ones shown on this page for only \$7.95. That's about \$2.65 per mystery—at least \$6 (and sometimes \$7 or \$8) less than just one costs in the publishers' original editions.

Recent selections have included new thrillers by top names like those featured here, plus Len Deighton, Dick Francis and many others. Start enjoying the benefits of membership in The Detective Book Club. Send no money now. You'll be billed later for your 12 mysteries. Send the coupon today to: The Detective Book Club, Roslyn, N.Y. 11576.



Please enroll me as a member and send me at once my 4 triple-volumes shown here, containing 12 mysteries. I enclose no money now. I may examine my books for one week, then will either accept all four volumes for the special new member price of only \$1 plus shipping, or return them and owe nothing.

As a member, I will receive free the Club's monthly Preview, which describes my next selection. I will always have at least ten days to reject any selection by returning the form provided. I may return any book sent for full credit within 21 days. For each monthly triple-volume I keep, I will send you only \$7.95, plus shipping. I understand I may cancel my membership at any time.

D23L4Q  
2-AR

**THE DETECTIVE BOOK CLUB, ROSLYN, N.Y. 11576.**

Mr./Mrs./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

PUBLISHED BY  
**WALTER J. BLACK, INC.**



ESTABLISHED 1923

Note: Members accepted in U.S.A. and Canada only; offer slightly different in Canada.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG  
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# The most eye-opening day of your life

The day was so long ago, it may be blurred by the years.

Was it a day as gray as the clouds or was it a day as gold as the sun? And exactly how long ago was it?

It's difficult to say. You were, after all, only a child at the time. And yet, you experienced a moment like no other moment in your life.

Suddenly, it was as if the world were in your hands. But there was no clap of thunder. There was only silence, for you were alone with nothing more than a printed page when you made an awesome discovery: *you could read*.

The words and sentences were simple enough, and even though they came slowly at first, the wonders of storybook friends such as Alice, Dorothy and Christopher Robin were just around the corner.

So, as time went on, were countless writings to move your mind, tug your heart and capture your imagination; for the power of the printed word had become forever yours that day nearly a lifetime ago. And the more you have made it yours through the years, the more it has changed the way you have lived and learned and hungered for more.

Americans by the tens of millions share the

same insatiable hunger for new information, new ideas and new ways to understand the ageless mysteries around them and the uncharted depths within them.

The more innovative their lives become and the more sophisticated their technologies become, the more they seek out ideas on every conceivable subject from arts to sciences and from politics to economics.

Does it surprise you that they depend on magazines more than they depend on any other sources of information for those precious breaths of fresh air we call ideas? It doesn't surprise the magazines of America. Today, they are more successful than they have ever been, because they are more challenged and more rewarded by their readers than ever before.

There are more than 10,000 magazines across America today, and while no two of them are quite alike, all of them have one thing in common.

They know that the essence of a magazine is to go deeper than the clamor and clutter of daily events, to strike a unique chord with its readers, and to touch them, one by one, with insights and inspirations that will open their eyes again and again.

*Nothing opens your eyes like a magazine.*

This message is one in a series from America's magazines.

© 1982 Magazine Publishers Association, Inc. 575 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG  
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



# GET AWAY WITH MURDER

GET 12 BEST-SELLING MYSTERIES FOR \$1.

P.D. JAMES **INNOCENT BLOOD** NOVINS

**WICKED DESIGNS** O'DONNELL PHAN

ROBERT L. DUNCAN  
**BRIMSTONE**

**Bombship** Bill Knox TIME CLUB

**MURDER IN THE WHITE HOUSE**  
MARGARET TRUMAN ARBOR HOUSE

**Pentecost** Beware Young Lovers

SIMENON **MAIGRET'S RIVAL** PRODUCT SELECTION

Westlake **CASTLE IN THE AIR** ELC

Leslie Charteris **THE SAINT AND  
THE TEMPLAR TREASURE** TIME CLUB SELECTION

**THE GREEN RIPPER**

JOHN D. MACDONALD

Mignon G.

Eberhart

Casa

Madrone

A Presence in an Empty Room

**IN THIS ISSUE**  
SPECIAL OFFER FROM  
THE DETECTIVE BOOK CLUB  
For details see  
last page.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG  
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED